SYRIANS UNDER “TEMPORARY PROTECTION” IN TURKEY AND SEX WORK

KEMAL ÖRDEK
SYRIANS UNDER “TEMPORARY PROTECTION”
IN TURKEY AND SEX WORK

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This publication has been prepared as part of the Project for Improving the Sexual Health Status of Syrian Sex Workers in Turkey. Project is implemented by Red Umbrella and UNFPA Turkey with financial support of the United States of America.

The entire responsibility of the content of the publication lies with the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association. This publication does not reflect the views of the United Nations Population Fund in any way.
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The “Syrians under Temporary Protection in Turkey and the Sex Work” raises a sensitive issue which has not been addressed up to date save for some media news reports and summary reports of few non-governmental organizations. This report deals with laws and actors with which Syrians in Turkey doing sex work or forcibly pushed into the sector come into contact, violations of rights they have been exposed to and the life stories they have agreed to share with us.

The sex work sector, into which Syrians who have fled the war in Syria prefer to enter or are forced to enter, bears a wide range of realities, going beyond news reported by the media. We, the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association, have undertaken a field study in order to understand the problem, to listen to the stories of the subjects with different profiles engaged in the sector, to consult with stakeholders working on that particular subject and to explore solution opportunities relating to the picture revealed.

During the field work we’ve done, we’ve come across a reality far more complex than we estimated. We have seen how the Syrians in the sector we have contacted struggle to survive in the face of their difficulties. The fear of getting arrested, the presence of intermediaries or traffickers to whom they are answerable, the fear of being threatened or suffering violence for various reasons, and many other factors have made it difficult for us to contact Syrian sex workers. During our field work, we used many methods to contact Syrian sex workers. Our contacts with persons already in contact with Syrian sex workers, our visits to places where they work, our efforts to persuade intermediaries and methods which we did not foresee but had to occasionally use enabled us to reach Syrian sex workers.

We are very much indebted to Syrian sex workers who—despite their anxieties and fears—have agreed to talk to us and shared with us the information that guided our work. This publication is intended to develop policies that will support them in their life struggles. We would like to express our gratitude to the Syrian sex workers whom we interviewed for their generous support for this work, which is instrumental in informing the public, as well as the authorities involved in developing and implementing relevant policies.

1 In some contexts, the word ‘pimp’ is used instead of ‘intermediary’. In this publication, ‘intermediary’ is preferred to express persons who provide space for sex workers to work, find clients for them and provide some sort of security and safety for sex workers.
It has been one of our primary objectives to undertake our fieldwork with a multi-sectoral approach. When working in the field, we asked for the opinions not only of Syrians who are in the sector but also of the public institutions and agencies which develop and implement policies related to the field. In this context, we would like to thank the representatives of all public institutions and agencies who have accepted to meet with us and have also conducted some sort of a consultation process in addition to the information they provided to us.

When in the field, we have also conducted interviews with many non-governmental organizations which undertake advocacy for the improvement of the living conditions of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and provide them with various forms of services to the best of their capacities. These interviews have served for improving our knowledge of the field, reaching the subjects of the matter under study and developing an insight into the network of complex relationships surrounding the problems. We are grateful to all non-governmental organizations which contributed to increasing the quality of our work and whom we have interviewed.

We would like to thank the sex workers and representatives of non-governmental organizations’ who arranged for us interviews with people working in the sector as well as with other relevant persons. We would also like to thank translators who helped us to overcome the language barrier during the interviews.

We, Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association, would like to express our deep gratitude to the United Nations Population Fund, which has generously provided technical and financial support for studies on sex workers’ sexual and reproductive health as well as their general health and human rights since 2014. The important report in your hand could not be published if it were not for the continuous support extended by the United Nations Population Fund Turkey Office for the advocacy efforts of our association, aimed at improving the general health and human rights standards, but particularly sexual health and reproductive health of sex workers, be it Turkish citizen or Syrian. We would like to extend our endless thanks to the United Nations Population Fund Turkey Office for their technical and financial support as well as their guidance for the study.

Finally, our thanks go to the staff and volunteers of the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association, who have been involved in various stages throughout the study and have provided all kinds of support in order to prepare the publication as exhaustively as possible.
FOREWORD

“Syrians under Temporary Protection in Turkey and Sex Work”, prepared as part of the project implemented by the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association, through the support of the United Nations Population Fund Turkey Office, aimed at improving the sexual health and reproductive health status of Syrian sex workers as well as their human rights standards is an important report, unprecedented in terms of its content.

The connection between Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey and the sex work sector has been covered by many newsreports since the flow of migrants that started in 2011. A significant majority of these reports have created the perception of “Syrians in the trap of prostitution” among Turkish public opinion and among competent public institutions and organizations which produce and implement policies on the issue. In other words, there has been a growing number of newsreports, especially on the position of Syrian women and girls in the sex work sector or in commercial sexual exploitation networks. Increased number of such newsreports has consolidated the belief among citizens of the Republic of Turkey that Syrians are detrimental to the public order or are detrimental to public health. Sex work, combined with commercial sexual exploitation of children or human trafficking and other criminal acts involving or alleged to involve Syrians, has led to an increased level of xenophobia against Syrians. It has been found that such xenophobia, influenced also by conflicts of economic interests, has been displayed even by some sex workers of Turkish nationality.

Despite a widely-shared perception of “victims in despair” relating to Syrian sex workers among society and public institutions and organizations, one of the realities identified throughout the study is that some of the Syrian sex workers enter sex work of their own will or were already sex workers before they came from Syria. This reality suggests that it is necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for the entry of all the subjects in question into the sector and their backgrounds, rather than a one-sided view when assessing the problem areas and needs identified in the study.

Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association has conducted a field study to determine the nature of the sex work among Syrians living in Turkey and to measure the accuracy of the events covered by newsreports. One of the reasons for undertaking this field study is prejudices observed in relation to the sex work and the likelihood of the misinformation generated by such prejudices to mislead the public opinion and relevant authorities.
Another leading motive for preparing this publication is to determine the sexual and reproductive health and general health status of Syrian sex workers. This publication covers in detail the working conditions of Syrian sex workers in the sector, the effect of these working conditions on the sexual health and reproductive health of Syrian sex workers, the effect of the legislation related to the temporary protection status and the legislation related to sex work on both health and human rights standards of Syrian sex workers, improvement of the health and reproductive health situation of Syrian sex workers and consequently protection and improvement of their general health.

This report raises the daily living conditions of Syrian sex workers, the violations of rights surrounding them, the strategies they have developed against these violations, their general health situation including particularly sexual health and reproductive health, legislation and policies surrounding them, social perception and finally proposed solutions for improving both working and living conditions of Syrian sex workers.

Prepared with a multi-sectoral approach, this report has been prepared in a way to serve for the works undertaken by numerous institutions, organizations and individuals as an intersection of topics such as migration, being a refugee, gender, violence, sex work, human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children, development of health- and human rights- oriented social policies. We are fully convinced that this report will be effectively used by all stakeholders in order to eliminate problems experienced by Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey, particularly of Syrian sex workers and those forced to work in the sector.
TERMINOLOGY

The present report focuses on issues related to both refugees and sex work. Both areas are characterised by a lack of detailed knowledge and the presence of prejudices relating to life experiences of the subjects in the area. Many myths make it difficult to access accurate information about the topics covered, and strengthen the social barriers that both refugees and sex workers face in accessing services.

Many people from Syria, primarily Syrian women, who have or do not have temporary protection status, are associated with involvement in sex work, commercial sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking. Many newsreports, frequently made by printed and visual media, that Syrian women and girls are dragged into the sex work sector and exploited in various forms by illegal criminal organizations, point out the gravity of the reality in the field on the one hand, and blurs and eliminates the differences between sex work, commercial exploitation of children and human trafficking on the other.

The report focuses on the problems and needs of those who have fled the war and related difficulties in their country and have been forced to take refuge in Turkey and who have taken up sex work in Turkey for various reasons. The report can achieve its goal only if readers develop common knowledge and perception about the concepts used. Therefore, it is important to clarify which concept is used in what sense in the report.

The report takes Syrian sex workers in Turkey as the target group whose problems are detailed and whose needs have been brought to the attention of the public and authorities. Sex worker is used throughout the report to refer to those who provide sexual and emotional services in order to obtain money, goods, articles or other benefits within the sex industry. The concept of sex work used throughout the report should be perceived as provision of sexual and emotional services to other persons in order to obtain money, goods, articles or other benefits.

There are many invisible factors that affect the situation of the people in the sector who came from Syria to Turkey for various reasons, took up sex work or who were already doing sex work in Syria and started to do it in Turkey after migration. War, internal conflicts, poverty, deprivation, gender-based violence, sexual orientation, violence based on gender identity or gender expression, human trafficking and many other similar factors have forced Syrians to migrate to neighbouring countries. It is not preferred to use the concept of sex work due to such state of coercion as well as impossibilities that many Syrians, including particularly Syrian women, were forced to live in. However, when commercial sex-
sexual exploitation of children and cases of human trafficking are left out, sex work should be mentioned as a sector in which Syrians are involved and which they prefer within a context of limited availability of alternatives. People who live in Turkey and practice sex work, whether Syrian or not, are experiencing many common difficulties similar to those of people working in all other sectors and are entering the sex work sector.

There are different factors that cause people with different backgrounds and identities to enter or remain in the sex work sector. It is not possible to argue that these factors are affecting equally Syrians and Turkish nationals. However, whatever the reason, people assess limited alternatives available to them for many reasons, including particularly economic difficulties they live in, and enter the sector as a result of this assessment. There are many situations in which there has not been such an assessment process, and this reality must not be dismissed; but it is not possible to consider such situations as sex work. It is necessary to separately assess, on a case by case basis, situations categorised otherwise that would be considered as commercial sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking and to take necessary measures in a way to address victims’ needs.

The field work process, the basis of this report, shows that some cases can be understood through a combined use of the concepts of sex work, human trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Therefore, it may not be possible to say that some cases clearly correspond to sex work. This born in mind, the intersectional realities are emphasized when evaluating such cases. An important point to emphasize is that this report has avoided a superficial and generalizing perspective and used instead a careful analysis taking into account many factors in order not to render criminal acts invisible.

The concept of sex worker used in the report does not only refer to non-trans woman sex workers, as understood in general. Non-trans women are mentioned throughout the report to refer to non-trans women. Sex work is a sector in which subjects of many different profiles from different genders, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions work. The information we gathered from interviews with Syrian sex workers shows that a large number of gay and bisexual men as well as trans-women who came from Syria to Turkey are also engaged in sex work. At the same time, many Syrian heterosexual men are also doing sex work. Given that news reported in the printed or visual media about the situation of Syrians in the sex work sector deal only with non-trans woman sex workers, it is obvious that the situation of gay and bisexual men and trans-women in the sector has been rendered invisible. Hence, the sex worker concept used in the report refers to sex workers from all genders, sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children, a phenomenon which emerges as a facet of intersectional realities within the context of Syrians in Turkey and sex work, is described as follows in the joint publication prepared by ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism), Network Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (NCSEC) and Network of Lawyers Working in the Field of Children (ÇAÇAV):
Commercial sexual exploitation of children is the sexual exploitation of children by an adult for money, gifts or a favour. The gift may be food or clothes. The favour may be good school pass marks, shelter or promise of protection.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is based on the idea that children can be traded as a commodity/goods and may take various forms. Tourism intended for sex with children, child prostitution, child pornography, child trafficking for sex or child marriage are different forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children.²

**Child victims of commercial sexual exploitation** are defined as the person -under the age of 18- who is the victim of these acts. The definition of “child” according to an age group under a certain age may vary depending on national legislation of countries. However, international conventions universally define persons under the age of 18 as children. On this basis, this report uses the same definition.

It is also important to mention the human trafficking cases alleged to have been suffered by Syrians in Turkey. Many Syrians who are involved in sex work sector are likely to encounter human traffickers or to be victims of human trafficking. The Directorate General of Migration Management defines **human trafficking** as follows³:

> Human trafficking means “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”.

The Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association defines human trafficking as defined by the Directorate General of Migration Management and by international conventions and assesses the cases addressed in the report accordingly.

News reported about the situation of Syrians in Turkey in the sex work sector or the reports of public institutions and agencies seem to have a blurred distinction or sometimes no distinction at all between the concepts of human trafficking and sex work. Claiming that sex work and human trafficking concepts are identical is both a rejection of reality and makes real victims of human trafficking invisible. The assessment made throughout the report also emphasizes human trafficking as an intersectional reality. However, this emphasis distinguishes human trafficking from sex work and it also raises diverse dynamics targeting Syrian sex workers and victims of human trafficking.

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Another concept that readers may come across when reading and assessing the report is the “intermediary”. Our field work shows us that a significant majority of Syrian sex workers are working with intermediaries with different profiles. According to the Turkish Penal Code, it is defined as a crime to act as an intermediary for someone to practice prostitution. But being intermediary is not synonymous with human trafficking. Given the dynamics within the sex work sector and the experiences of sex workers and trafficking victims, it is important to emphasize the difference between the concepts of intermediation and human trafficking.

As can be seen in many different parts of the report, intermediaries with different profiles work with Syrian sex workers. This difference can also give us an idea of the level of delinquency of intermediaries. In some cases, Syrian sex workers get in contact and work with intermediaries themselves, and in some cases the level of domination and pressure exerted by intermediaries on Syrian sex workers may be high, leading to criminal acts going beyond the definition of “intermediation” made in the Turkish Penal Code. The concept of “intermediary” used throughout the report is used to refer to persons who work with sex workers, who, in most cases, provide a space for sex workers to work, who find clients and who protect sex workers against violence they may be exposed to. Keeping this definition in mind, it is important to remember that intermediaries may also be perpetrators of various forms of violations of rights against Syrian sex workers.
INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The present report has been prepared as part of the Project for Improving the Sexual Health Status of Syrian Sex Workers in Turkey implemented by the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association, through financial and technical support of the United Nations Population Fund Turkey Office.

The report has been prepared with a view to determining the problems and needs relating to the general human rights situation, particularly sexual health and reproductive health status of sex workers who have come from Syria to Turkey whether under temporary protection or not, and to raise the knowledge level of public authorities.

The goals that the Red Umbrella tries to achieve through the report are:

a) To identify the problems and needs of the Syrian sex workers living and working in Turkey regarding sexual health and reproductive health status,

b) To identify the problems and needs of the Syrian sex workers living and working in Turkey regarding the general human rights situation,

c) To raise the knowledge level of relevant law-makers, law enforcement officers and policy-making institutions and agencies in order to improve the sexual and reproductive health and general human rights conditions of Syrian sex workers living and working in Turkey,

d) To increase the possibility of provision of accessible and quality services to meet various needs of Syrian sex workers living and working in Turkey in order to improve their sexual health, reproductive health as well as general human rights situation,

e) To enable relevant public institutions, organizations and other stakeholders to come together in order to solve the problems of Syrian sex workers living in Turkey on the basis of their needs and to encourage them to prepare road maps and action plans based on the findings of the report,

f) To develop activities that will build the capacities of Syrian sex workers living in Turkey so that the problems they are exposed to can be solved on the basis of their needs,

g) To undertake advocacy targeting relevant stakeholders in order to improve sexual and reproductive health as well as general human rights situation of Syrian sex workers living in Turkey.

In the light of the above-mentioned purposes and objectives, the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association is designing and implementing activities to be carried out in short and medium term. As next steps, there will be roundtable meetings,
trainings, capacity-building activities for the field, campaigns and all other necessary activities to be organized in a way to involve all stakeholders in order to transfer the findings of the report to relevant public institutions and organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and to other stakeholders and to ensure that these stakeholders take part in the activities.
B. STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION

This report dwells on problems which Syrian sex workers in Turkey, whether under temporary protection or not, are exposed to, their needs which should be addressed to eliminate these problems, their proposals for solving these problems, opinions of public institutions and agencies regarding the issues as well as opinions and proposals of non-governmental organizations, universities and other stakeholders.

The report consists of six main parts. These parts are as follows:

I. Introduction
II. Methodology
III. Sex Work and Being a Refugee: Legal Status
IV. Findings of the Study
V. “Is There One Who Understands Us?”: Never-Ending Problems of Syrian Sex Workers
VI. Recommendations

The aim of the report is to ensure that the problems to which Syrian sex workers are exposed can be understood as clearly as possible by the public and the authorities. For this purpose, the report has been divided into six main parts mentioned above, bringing to the attention of readers the following issues: the problems encountered by Syrian sex workers, the needs which need to be addressed in order to eliminate these problems and recommendations put forward on the basis of these needs.

Part one of the report presents an overview of the political crisis in Syria in order to help the readers to better understand the findings of the report, emphasizes the humanitarian crisis caused by this political crisis, addresses the issues of forced migration, asylum and gender relations emerging with the humanitarian crisis, the destructive effects of these relations on vulnerable social groups, the relationship between sex work and being a refugee, problems arising from inequality and injustice including particularly human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, general situation of Syrians in Turkey and general health situation of Syrians in Turkey. In other words, the Introduction presents background information about the issues covered in the report.

Part two of the report provides readers of the report with detailed information on the methodology used to reach the findings of the report. In this context, the methodology part provides information on the methods used during the field study to reach the findings of the report, difficulties encountered in the field study and limitations of the study.

Part three of the report focuses on national legislation relating to refugees and sex workers in Turkey and examples of international legislation relating to both areas. This part, providing information on national legislation on sex work and refugee law in Turkey, mentions main international conventions dealing with sex workers and refugees, resolutions and reports of international organizations and institutions.
Part four of the report focuses on the key findings of the field research. This part deals with demographic information relating to Syrian sex workers interviewed, their level of knowledge on human rights situation and general health and the level of knowledge of public institutions and organizations interviewed, service providers from all areas and non-governmental organizations working in the field of refugees on the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers, and forms the basis of the present report.

Part five of the report focuses on problem areas and needs identified during the field study. This part deals with human rights violations to which Syrian sex workers in Turkey are exposed, social and economic problems surrounding them, services they have difficulty accessing, and factors that strengthen structural problems. This part also examines the level of knowledge of Syrian sex workers about access to services and the level of knowledge of public institutions and other stakeholders about the needs of Syrian sex workers.

Part six of the report presents to readers what solution proposals can be developed on the basis of the needs of Syrian sex workers to address the problems that they are exposed to. This part also presents tips on how to evaluate the recommendations put forward to public institutions, organizations and to other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations and universities in response to problem areas.
C. AN OVERVIEW OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS

The situation that emerged in Syria is part of the process called the “Arab Spring” that started in North Africa in 2010 and caused the political atmosphere of the countries in the region to change radically.

The crisis that has emerged in Syria and which is still unfolding has started during opponents’ protests which broke out in 2011 in Daraa. The social unrest that initially emerged in the form of peaceful demonstrations has lost their character of local protests over time, through involvement of many local, national, regional and global actors.

In order to understand the crisis in Syria, it is important to briefly talk about the establishment of the Syrian Arab Republic, the form of regime after the establishment, unrests which emerged after the establishment, and criticisms addressed by opposition groups against the Ba’ath Party in power.

As a result of the 1963 military coup in Syria, the Ba’ath Party seized power. After the then President Hafiz Assad became Prime Minister in 1970, and declared himself president of the republic in 1971, the Assad family governed nearly 40 years in a way that was repressive, isolationist and completely closed to criticism. Until Bashar al-Assad became president of the republic in 2000 following the death of his father Hafez al-Assad in 2000, the oppressive political regime in Syria was known for assimilation, ban, exile and torture against many opposition groups including Syrian Kurds and Sunni Arabs. The repressive regime policies, the most conspicuous of which was the mass massacre against groups in Hama in 1972 continued when Bashar al-Assad came into power. Until the civil war that broke out in 2011 and still under way, opposition groups have continued to criticize the regime in various arenas, with the support of the international public opinion as well for the purpose of establishing a more democratic political order.

Opposition movements which intensified with the influence of the “Arab Spring” and violent repression of the peaceful protests, gained strength as a result of interventions of local and national opposition groups as well as countries in the region and international actors, leading to the tendency to lead a political combat supported with military means.

The demands of the political groups that opposed the Ba’ath Party and advocated a change of regime in the country are as follows:

a) Enhancing political freedoms in the country,

b) Holding elections through democratic methods and by giving equal opportunities to different political groups,

c) Putting an end to repressive practices by political power on grounds of ethnic and sectarian considerations,

d) Releasing political prisoners and prisoners of thought,

e) Guaranteeing the right of different political groups to participate in politics,
f) The freedom of civil society organizations to carry out their activities,

These demands have not been met, resulting in the intensification of armed conflicts and the involvement of many actors other than the Syrian government and dissident groups. This has led to the emergence of a civil war engulfing the whole country under the influence of different factors and the formation of political structures on an ethnic and sectarian basis.

The civil war in the country has led to negotiations at the United Nations for the settlement of the problem and to the strengthening of DAESH, al-Nusra and similar terrorist groups in political and military levels at an unprecedented scale. With the Syrian crisis evolving into a factor affecting the entire Middle East, actors such as the United States, Russia, some members of the European Union, Iran and Hezbollah have begun to be part of the armed conflict in the country. Coalitions allegedly formed to combat terrorist groups such as DAESH and al-Nusra, global powers that got involved in armed conflicts in the country upon the demand of the Ba’ath regime and changing balances caused the Syrian crisis to take a heavier toll especially on the civilians in the country and deepen the humanitarian crisis.

The Syrian civil war has up to date had a huge impact in the context of humanitarian crisis. According to the data of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs4 almost half of the total population of Syria were left with no choice but to leave the region they were living in. While more than half of these people migrated to safer areas within the country, a considerable part of them have migrated to other countries. As of February 2017, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance inside and outside Syria due to the crisis in Syria is 13.5 million. 5 million people have left Syria because of war. 6.3 million people have been displaced due to violence in Syria. In the areas under siege, about 650 thousand people are prevented by the actors in the region from accessing basic human needs like water, food, medicine. Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria in 2011, about 500 thousand people have died.

The civil war in Syria and political, social and humanitarian consequences of this war affect directly or indirectly the countries where Syrians took shelter such as Lebanon, Jordan and particularly Turkey as well as countries in Europe, America, Asia and Australia. Poverty, famine, violence and many other consequences of war and other factors have forced Syrians to live in very dire conditions in many parts of the world.

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D. GENERAL SITUATION OF SYRIANS IN TURKEY

The civil war that has been going on in Syria since 2011 has caused a significant number of Syrians fleeing their country to take shelter in Turkey. The first flow of intensive Syrian migration from Syria to Turkey began in April 2011. Throughout the same year, low numbers of Syrians came to Turkey, but as of 2012, high numbers of Syrians entered Turkey following an escalation of the conflicts in Syria and intensified human rights violations and through the influence of Turkey’s “open door policy”.

As of the end of 2012, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey has reached 14 thousand 237 people. This number has increased significantly year by year since the crisis in Syria has deepened over the years and has become chronic. As of June 1, 2017, the number of Syrians who have temporary protection status in Turkey is 3 million 28 thousand 226.5

*Yıllara Göre Geçici Koruma Kapsamındaki Suriyeliler*

![Graph showing the number of Syrians under Temporary Protection in Turkey by year](Number of Syrians under Temporary Protection in Turkey by years, as of 01.06.2017)

*01.06.2017 tarihi itibariyle

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Table below: Title: Breakdown of Syrians under Temporary Protection by Provinces, by alphabetical order. Column 1: Province no, C 2: Province, C 3: Number of people registered, C 4: Population, C 5: Proportion as Compared to the Population of the Province. Second half the same.

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<td>4.96%</td>
<td>242.347</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BAYDAK</td>
<td>4.001</td>
<td>714.572</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B.SPİYER</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>542.255</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>BURSA</td>
<td>5.500</td>
<td>396.673</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>344.845</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MERSİN</td>
<td>320.351</td>
<td>60.588</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>35.080</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MARDİN</td>
<td>78.752</td>
<td>6.394.513</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MÜzzle</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>7.229.355</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
<td>2.226</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>MİLEK</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>98.309</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>ARNAVUT</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>136.990</td>
<td>0.67%</td>
<td>94.613</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>AKŞAM</td>
<td>8.396</td>
<td>1.621.640</td>
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<td>10.72</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>BÜLÜK</td>
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<td>1.484.174</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>2.857</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>KÜÇÜK</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19.239</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>BAYRAML</td>
<td>20.010</td>
<td>575.899</td>
<td>3.42%</td>
<td>22.199</td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>BEYAZIT</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>90.855</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
<td>20.205</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>BİDE</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>218.297</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>226.427</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>BEŞİK</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>794.560</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
<td>764.059</td>
<td>0.89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>BİLEK</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>414.225</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>426.225</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>BEŞ</td>
<td>1.256</td>
<td>299.890</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>BEŞ</td>
<td>8.150</td>
<td>301.408</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>249.808</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>BİRA</td>
<td>221.285</td>
<td>2.906.396</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>521.285</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>CANAKKALE</td>
<td>3.060</td>
<td>513.793</td>
<td>6.20%</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>183.800</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>457.267</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>1.048</td>
<td>527.990</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>527.990</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>8.278</td>
<td>1.600.687</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>8.278</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>35.295</td>
<td>1.471.119</td>
<td>1.85%</td>
<td>7.325</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>370.371</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>391.790</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>6.028</td>
<td>578.780</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
<td>578.780</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>226.032</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>226.032</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>763.071</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>521.285</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>2.586</td>
<td>848.842</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>332.650</td>
<td>3.574.294</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>3.574.294</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>446.467</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>321.140</td>
<td>1.314.825</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>371.263</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>1.041</td>
<td>267.813</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
<td>1.041</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>389.267</td>
<td>1.555.165</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>389.267</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>214.785</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>2.600</td>
<td>427.328</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>2.600</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>483.810</td>
<td>54.904.816</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>483.810</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>ÇANAKKALE</td>
<td>110.876</td>
<td>4.223.845</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>110.876</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first ten provinces in Turkey with highest numbers of Syrians under temporary protection, in decreasing order, are İstanbul, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, Gaziantep, Adana, Mersin, Kilis, Bursa, İzmir and Mardin.\(^6\)

The first 5 provinces with the highest proportion of Syrians in terms of number of Syrians as compared to local population are as follows: Kilis (96.15%), Hatay (25.03%), Şanlıurfa (21.93%), Gaziantep (16.82%) and Mardin (11.92%).

While some of the Syrians who took refuge in Turkey are staying in temporary accommodation centres (camps), some of them are registered and live outside these centres. According to the Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), 246,800 (8%) of the 3 million 28 thousand 226 Syrians, under temporary protection status in Turkey, stay in temporary protection centres. The remaining 2 million 782 thousand 146 people (92%) live under temporary protection across all cities of Turkey.

(The table below: Syrians inside and outside temporary accommodation centres)
In 10 provinces of Turkey, there are a total of 23 temporary accommodation centres, designed and operated for Syrians under temporary protection. In terms of population hosted, these provinces are as follows in decreasing order: Şanlıurfa (42%), Gaziantep (15%), Kilis (14%), Kahramanmaraş (8%), Hatay (8%), Osmaniye (4%), Adıyaman (4%), Mardin (1%) and Adana (1%).

**BREAKDOWN OF SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION BY CAMPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCOMMODATION CENTRES (CAMPS) AS OF 01/06/2017 (23 CAMPS IN 10 PROVINCES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ŞANLIURFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAZİANTEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KİLİS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAHRAMANMARAŞ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARDİN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HATAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADİYAMAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSMANIYE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALATYA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF SYRIANS LIVING IN HOST COMMUNITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL NUMBER OF SYRIANS IN TURKEY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data on camps are provided by Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD)

According to the data of the Ministry of Interior’s General Directorate of Migration Management, 1 million 619 thousand 986 of the Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey are men while 1 million 408 thousand 240 of them are women.

In terms of age distribution, 46% (1 million 385 thousand 922) of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey are aged 0 - 18 years old. In other words, almost half of the Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey are children. 24% of the Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey (739,460) are aged 18-30 years old. When the population in both categories is considered, a total of 70% of the Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey are children and young people. This shows that there is a very dynamic Syrian population in Turkey.
According to the Report on Syrian Women in Turkey issued by the Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) in 2014, Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey mostly come from the following cities: Aleppo (35.7%), Idlib (20.9%), Raqqa (10.9%), Latakia (8.2%), Hama (7.6%), Hasakah (5.4%), Deirez-Zor (3.9%), Damascus (3.8%), Homs (1.7%), Suwayda (0.4%), Daraa (% 0.3), Tartus (0.1%), Quneitra (0.1%). The data retrieved from the above-mentioned report should be updated. There will be new information about the cities from which Syrians come before taking shelter in Turkey during 3 years following the completion of the study, making it possible to make an update.

When one takes into account the cities from which most of the Syrians come to Turkey, it can be argued that most of the migration to Turkey comes from cities close to Turkey where sectarian and ethnic tensions are intense, and where there are intense and constant armed conflicts. According to the field study conducted by AFAD in 2013, 67% of...
the Syrians who have come to Turkey have done so for security reasons, 16% for political reasons, 10% for economic reasons and 5% due to health conditions. According to the same report, Syrians in Turkey have chosen Turkey for the following reasons: ease of transportation (76%), better conditions as compared to other countries (8%), confidence in Turkey (10%), migration for religious considerations (2%), other (2%).

Syrians in Turkey have some interesting characteristics in terms of demographic characteristics such as registration status, numbers, camp or non-camp distribution, age and gender as well as for some other conditions. It is important to note many factors, such as negative prejudices against Syrians which have become a considerable population group in Turkey, stigmatizing approaches and practices, violations of rights, barriers to access to services, and lack of the capacity of Syrians to deal with these obstacles.

As a general assessment, it should be stated that there are negative social prejudices against Syrians in Turkey, especially in border provinces neighbouring to Syria where there are significant numbers of Syrians living. The network of chronic problems in Syria has intensified the migration of Syrians to Turkey, which has caused some discomforts among Turkish citizens. Many times, barriers to social cohesion turn into judicial cases opposing Syrians to citizens of the Republic of Turkey. There are judicial cases involving Syrians as perpetrators, as well attempts of collective lynching based on hatred directed by Turkish nationals against Syrians. In districts and neighbourhoods hosting large numbers of Syrians; acts of setting fire to houses where Syrians live, abduction, extortion of their incomes and/or of the property are significant as they show social anger and hatred towards Syrians.11

One of the important factors contributing to the anger and hatred reinforced by social stigmatization targeting the Syrians is the employment of Syrians as cheap labour. Many Syrians living on or under poverty threshold are employed by many businesses with low wages. Businesses which prefer Syrians who have no choice but to accept this situation are either employing fewer Turkish nationals or preferring Syrians completely. The resulting situation can reinforce the hatred towards Syrians among Turkish nationals who cannot find a job or who have to accept low incomes for lack of jobs and consequent conflicts.

Another factor which is widespread among Turkish citizens and aggravates hatred and anger towards Syrians, in addition to the high demand for Syrians working for low wages, is the perception that the state is favouring Syrians. Owners of small and medium-sized businesses, in particular, declare that they have to pay taxes relating to their businesses, while Syrians do not pay taxes on businesses they start. In addition to these and similar economic reasons, many Turkish nationals claim that the state has put Syrians on salary,

that Syrians benefit from public services free of charge, and that Syrians benefit from privileges that Turkish nationals do not enjoy. All the examples detailed above give rise to the consequences which increase xenophobia towards Syrians. The resulting negative perception takes away the capacity of Syrians to fight against obstacles they are exposed to.

Contrary to the widespread perception among Turkish public opinion that Syrians are being equipped with everything they need by the state, many Syrians are struggling with serious difficulties both in terms of working conditions and living conditions. While standards are developed concerning living conditions of Syrians in camps set up and controlled by the State on the one hand, it does not seem actually possible to set standards for the majority of Syrians living in host communities. The impacts of the measures developed for Syrians, particularly for those with serious problems of social cohesion, will be more visible in coming years.

Some of the Syrians prefer to stay in camps, unlike others. Syrians who prefer to stay in camps mention the aid provided by international humanitarian organizations for the camps and security needs as a motivation to stay in camps.

A significant majority of Syrians who have settled outside the camps are struggling with the language problem. A significant part of Syrians living in host communities can not benefit from language courses offered to Syrians living in the camps. While many Syrians benefit from language courses offered by municipalities and non-governmental organizations in and outside the camps, a significant part of them do not have access to these services. The language barrier severely restricts Syrians’ access to the services they need.

Poverty is a reality that many Syrians are forced to live with. Many Syrians living in Turkey have large families. Syrians are suffering in an environment in which many family members have to live together and try to earn income through limited economic alternatives. Working mostly in informal sectors with low incomes, Syrians try to make a living out of begging, peddling and the like. Some Syrians have no choice but to consider alternatives such as construction work, seasonal agricultural work, sex work, working at small workshops or various jobs in service sectors. Many Syrians working with low incomes are employed without any security at work. Low income levels and insecurity aggravate the economic exploitation by business owners. Syrians have limited access to justice mechanisms against the violations of rights that they are exposed to at work. This means that poverty, insecurity and economic exploitation are victimizing many Syrians in a vicious cycle.

Syrians also have very limited access to justice mechanisms after various types of violations of rights they are exposed to. Syrian victims of discrimination and violence cannot benefit from justice mechanisms due to lack of Turkish language skills, lack of access to information about justice mechanisms, lack of access to any referral mechanisms in most cases, low incomes, and so on. In addition, Syrians also face prejudiced and exclusive attitudes of public officials such as law enforcement officers when seeking justice and thus have seriously limited access to justice.
An important part of Syrians in Turkey are experiencing prejudices, stigmatization, discrimination and violence. There are a large number of Syrians who face ill treatment and discrimination in their access to housing services, health services, employment and education, and justice mechanisms. An important part of Syrians who took shelter in Turkey fleeing the civil war, poverty and violations of rights in their country are waiting for steps to be taken to improve their conditions in Turkey.
D. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BEING REFUGEE, GENDER AND SEX WORK

Internal conflicts and wars cause women, girls and LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexual individuals) to become more vulnerable than others on grounds of gender. Women, girls and LGBTI, whose human rights and social condition are at risk even when there aren’t any deep political or economic crises and military conflicts, are disproportionately affected by war.

According to United Nations statistics, about 90% of those killed in wars are civilians. An overwhelming majority of these deaths are women and child deaths.\(^{12}\) In addition to deaths, many women and children are also subjected to gross violations of rights during internal conflicts and wars, when fleeing these conflicts and wars, and after migrating from places of conflict and war. The resulting heavy picture shows that gender-based violence turns into a war crime at times of armed conflict and war.

The Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, published in 2013, entitled “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons”\(^{13}\), describes how and when cases of sexual and gender-based violence which occur during and after times of war target vulnerable groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>TYPE OF VIOLENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During conflict - prior to flight</td>
<td>Abuse by persons in power; Sexual bartering of women; Sexual assault, rape; Abduction of women by armed members of parties in conflict, including security forces, as well as sexual violence; Mass rape; Forced pregnancies Exposure to HIV and STI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During flight</td>
<td>Sexual attack by bandits, border guards, pirates; Capture for trafficking by smugglers, slave traders;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the country of asylum</td>
<td>Sexual attack, coercion, extortion by persons in authority; Exploitation of children in various forms; Domestic violence; Sexual violence and exploitation in camps; Sex for survival/forced prostitution;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{12}\) United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), [http://www.un.org/women-watch/daw/followup/session/preskit/fs5.htm](http://www.un.org/women-watch/daw/followup/session/preskit/fs5.htm), Access Date: 15.05.2017

WHEN | TYPE OF VIOLENCE
---|---
During repatriation | Sexual abuse of women and children who have been separated from their families; Sexual abuse by persons in power; Sexual attack by bandits, border guards, pirates;
During reintegration | Sexual abuse against returnees as a form of retribution; Sexual extortion in order to regularise legal status; Exclusion of women from decision-making processes; Denial of or obstructed access to resources of various types needed by returnees

As shown in the table above, women and girls in particular are subjected to physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence in country of origin or in the country of asylum in cases of conflict and war. Women, girls and LGBTI, who have limited access to resources and can benefit from hardly any post-violence protection and support mechanism may enter the sex work sector as a kind of survival strategy. It is known that large numbers of non-trans women, trans women, gay and bisexual men and women are present in the sex work sector.

The reasons for entering the sex work sector in the country of origin or in the country of asylum in cases of internal conflict and war can be classified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASON FOR ENTRY INTO THE SECTOR</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal preferences based on needs</td>
<td>Many refugees choose from among a limited number of alternatives due to their economic and social helplessness. In the face of limited jobs available, there are many refugees who prefer sex work because of flexibility of working hours, few criteria of competence required for the work, high level of earning and so on. In addition to those who choose to continue sex work in order to meet their own needs, there are also those who prefer to leave the sector after meeting their financial needs. Many refugees were also doing sex work, either full-time or part-time, in the country of origin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**REASON FOR ENTRY INTO THE SECTOR** | **DESCRIPTION**
---|---
Being a victim of human trafficking | Human trafficking and sex work are different things. Although there is a difference, many people who are victims of human trafficking are exploited constantly in the sex industry, especially in cases of internal conflict and war. These people are not called sex workers, but victims of human trafficking.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children | Many children become victims of commercial sexual exploitation in various forms. It is a fact that children, a vulnerable social group, are sexually exploited systematically and are dragged into the sex industry in a vicious cycle or forced to remain in this sector, particularly in cases of internal conflict and war. It is known that many children who have lost their families or have been separated from their families while fleeing crises in countries of origin become victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Sex work and commercial sexual exploitation of children are different concepts. Children under the age of 18 who are dragged into sex industry or forced to remain in this sector are victims of a crime against humanity.

In areas where internal conflicts or wars break out, the intensity of gender-based violence increases on routes of migration when fleeing internal conflicts and wars, in countries or regions of asylum. Many women and LGBTI who lose their spouse, are forced to leave their children, are separated from their families, move away from sources of material and moral support, struggle with poverty. In particular, women and LGBTI who face poverty and gender-based inequality and injustice go for or are dragged into limited alternative sources of income available to them. Many factors such as poverty, insecurity, gender-based violence and discrimination, xenophobia, language barrier, obstacles arising from laws and policies increase the number of people struggling to survive in the sex industry.

Women, girls and LGBTIs, accompanied by sexual and gender-based structural problems which they encounter on grounds of migration and being a refugee, go for or are dragged into sex work.
E. GENERAL HEALTH STATUS OF SYRIANS IN TURKEY

It is difficult to reach comprehensive and detailed statistics on the general health status and needs of Syrians living in Turkey. Annual migration reports issued by the Directorate General of Migration Management, reports of international organizations and agencies specialized in refugees including particularly United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, reports of non-governmental organizations providing services for refugees or advocating refugees, news reported by local or national media on this issue are some of the sources which give us information on the access of Syrians in Turkey to health-care information and services and on their general health condition. It is difficult to say that the above-mentioned sources of information focus thematically on the access of Syrians to health-care information and services. These sources are mostly related to human rights of Syrians living in Turkey, their access to services and their social condition.

The above-mentioned sources provide various information on the general health condition of Syrians living in Turkey. Although it is difficult to reach a detailed analysis, it is clear that Syrians have serious difficulties, including the language barrier, in accessing health-care information and services.

Although the Government of the Republic of Turkey has developed some policies, service delivery models and some practices in order to facilitate the access of Syrians to health-care services, it is clear that some other policies must be developed in order to address the difficulties which occur. Cohesion-based social policies need to be developed by taking into account special needs of Syrians. Improving the general health status of Syrians can only be possible through a multi-sectoral approach policies as well as policies and practices developed based on data from the field.

Syrians in Turkey have in general limited access to health-care information. In addition to language barriers, there is a shortage of adequate means to disseminate information on health services designed and implemented in accordance with sensitivities of Syrians by taking into account the conditions they live in. Programs implemented in the field by non-governmental organizations acting as implementation partners of relevant agencies of United Nations such as United Nations Population Fund, including particularly United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and some actions taken by the Ministry of Health including the dissemination of migrant health centres provide information on health-care services needed by Syrians as part of outreach activities. However, programs implemented are not enough and many Syrians, particularly vulnerable Syrian population groups have limited access to health-care information.

Limited access to health information also limits the access of many Syrians to health-care services they need. Migrant health-care policies, which have increased over the last few years and developed to allow Syrians to access health services among others, aim to eliminate limitations in question but some limitations persist.
Migrant health centres, put into practice by the Ministry of Health in order to facilitate Syrians’ access to primary health care services, currently adopted and implemented by some provincial and district municipalities have been beneficial for many Syrians. However, it is claimed that many social factors have an adverse effect on the access of particularly vulnerable Syrian population to these centres, (sex workers, those living with HIV, LGBTIs, etc.).

An important factor impeding Syrians’ access to health-care information and services is the language barrier. Although there are Arabic-speaking translators employed at migrant health centres or relevant service canners, there remains a serious language barrier at other health care facilities.

Housing conditions of many Syrians are far from being hygienic. Many Syrians, who live in peripheries of cities, in rural and unhealthy conditions, are faced with health problems. Many Syrians who are working in low-income generating sectors that require heavy labour and under circumstances of economic exploitation are experiencing serious health problems. Irregular and inadequate nutrition and sleeping conditions impair physical and psychological health of many Syrians. In other words, heavy socioeconomic conditions mean a worsening of general health situation for many Syrians.

Many organisations, municipalities and non-governmental organizations, especially the Ministry of Health, have been doing a valuable work for providing access to health care services and information for Syrians in Turkey who have fled the war and resulting severe humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately, services offered are not enough for all Syrians. Many Syrians, especially vulnerable social groups cannot access adequate health care services in the face of health problems they experience in Turkey, influenced also by heavy socioeconomic conditions they live in. Many factors such as heavy labour conditions, inadequacy of income per family or individual, insecurity, violence, exclusion, xenophobia, language barrier, discrimination, lack of policies designed and implemented in line with needs of Syrians, and so on make access to health-care information and services difficult for Syrians in Turkey.
METHODOLOGY
METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to determine the general human rights situation of Syrian sex workers in Turkey, including particularly their sexual health and reproductive health situation by bearing in mind their needs. During design of the study, a number of stakeholders directly concerned by the situation were interviewed to discuss the needs of Syrian sex workers and recommendations expected to be developed in parallel to these needs.

Discussions conducted during the study have been evaluated with a multi-sectoral and holistic approach. Discussions were conducted not only with Syrian sex workers, but also with public institutions and agencies developing and implementing relevant policies, non-governmental organizations providing services and advocating Syrian sex workers, health service providers and academics. It was aimed to address the problems and needs in this particular field not through a unilateral, but through multilateral and objective point of view.

Within the scope of the study, applications were made to relevant public institutions and organizations as part of the right to information. Where face-to-face interviews were not possible, applications were filed as part of the right to information as a means of accessing the information needed.

Interviews with Syrian sex workers have been conducted mostly with the support of an Arabic - Turkish interpreter. Questions asked focused on the access of Syrian sex workers to health-care information and services, their experience of discrimination and violence, barriers they face in social cohesion, their access to protection and support mechanisms, and their needs in all these areas. Additional follow-up questions asked by the interviewer on the basis of answers during interviews have been an extremely important tool in elaborating data of this study.

Interviews were held between September and December 2016. Field visits were undertaken to Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Mersin, Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Diyarbakır (9 provinces in total) to conduct interviews. Following criteria have been taken into account when identifying provinces for interviews: a) Concentration of the Syrian population in border provinces b) Concentration of Syrian population not only in border provinces but also in other regions of Turkey, c) Provinces with a concentration of activities of non-governmental organizations working on refugees, d) Provinces where Syrian sex workers can work in the sector more comfortably as compared to some other provinces, e) Provinces where frequent media coverage of Syrians’ presence in sex industry, f) Provinces with temporary accommodation centres.

A total of 26 Syrian sex workers were interviewed as part of the study. While some of these interviews were conducted using face-to-face and semi-structured questionnaires, some were conducted using telephone interviews or social media tools or mobile appli-
The fact that Syrian sex workers are largely invisible has resulted in the researcher trying to gain access by using as many tools as possible.

In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with 17 of the Syrian sex workers interviewed. The Syrian sex workers with whom face-to-face interviews were conducted live in the following cities: Istanbul (7), İzmir (3), Gaziantep (2), Mersin (2), Hatay (1), Ankara (1), Adana (1).

4 Syrian sex workers were interviewed via telephone. These sex workers live in: Istanbul (2), Ankara (1), Gaziantep (1). 5 Syrian sex workers were interviewed via social media tools, of whom (2) via Facebook and via Hornet (3), a mobile application used by gay men and trans women to find partners. Of those Syrian sex workers interviewed via Facebook and Hornet, 3 live in Istanbul, 1 in Izmir, and 1 in Bursa.

The distribution of the 26 Syrian sex workers accessed by cities is as follows: 12 in Istanbul, 4 in İzmir, 3 in Gaziantep, 2 in Ankara, 2 in Mersin, 1 in Hatay, 1 in Adana and 1 in Bursa.

In addition to sex workers, discussions were also held with many public institutions and agencies in provinces visited. In this context, face-to-face meetings were held with a total of 47 representatives of public institutions. The distribution of the public institutions and organizations interviewed is as follows: a) 31 ministries, governorates or provincial directorates affiliated to ministries, b) 7 bar associations, c) 9 provincial or district municipalities.

Interviews were held with provincial directorates of family and social policies ministry, provincial public health directorates, provincial police directorates, SSI (Social Security Institution) provincial directorates, provincial migration management directorates, provincial and district units of social assistance and solidarity foundations and relevant units of these public institutions and agencies. In the same context, meetings were held with the governors or assistant governors in provinces visited.

Detailed interviews were held with lawyers in centralbureaus or various committees of bar associations in provinces visited including committees of women’s rights, refugee rights, children’s rights, human rights and health law committees. Likewise, interviews were also held deputy mayors or directors of provincial or district municipalities responsible for social assistance, social services, family and women or health-care services.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 13 healthcare providers in total as part of the interviews conducted in provinces. Service providers in this group consisting of physicians and nurses work at family health centres, migrant health centres (9) or at hospitals (4) attached to the Ministry of Health.

Where face-to-face interviews could not be held with public institutions and organizations, applications for information were filed via petitions. Applications were filed to the following as part of the right to information: Ministry of Interior National Police Directorate, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Ministry of Labour and
Social Security, Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Presidency, (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Bursa, Mersin, Antalya, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, Hatay, Osmaniye, Kahramanmaraş). In addition, applications were made to the Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Authority to allow access to temporary accommodation centres hosting Syrians in Turkey to examine relevant issues.

All applications for information have been answered back. Applications for information have been answered by Ministry of Interior National Police Directorate, Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Family and Social Policies. In addition to the answers, provincial police directorates in Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, Antalya, Hatay, Adana, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa and Diyarbakır have also provided answers upon referral by relevant directorates general. However, in nearly all of the responses, no answer was given to the questions asked on the situation of Syrians living in Turkey under temporary protection and engaged in the sex industry, citing “sensitivity of the issue”. In most of the answers given, only the general registration information about Syrians in Turkey, available on the web page of the Directorate General of Migration Management was referred to and it was stated that information other than this can not be given. Applications filed with bar associations were answered only by relevant units of bar associations in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir and Adana.

In applications for information, questions focused on the socioeconomic conditions of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey working in sex industry, the situation of the victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, statistics on Syrians who have been subjected to administrative proceedings because of doing unregistered sex work, the quality and adequacy of services provided to Syrians with special needs due to constant victimization in sex industry as well as general data about Syrians involved in offences defined in the Turkish Penal Code under the title of “prostitution”. At the same time, the relevant units of the above-mentioned bar associations were asked questions about general case information on Syrians who apply to them after a victimization.

Interviews were also held with a total of 12 non-governmental organizations which provide services directly to Syrians living in Turkey, operate in order to improve the general human rights situation of Syrians, or carry out activities related to Syrian LGBTI. These NGOs are: Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM); KAMER Foundation; Istanbul LGBTI Solidarity Association; Social Policy, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association (SPOD); Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF); Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association; Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly; Foundation for Solidarity with Women (KADAV); Association of Solidarity with Syrian Refugees; Association for Solidarity with Refugees; Association of Social Workers (SHUDER); International Centre for Middle East Peace Research (IMPR).

Many difficulties were encountered at almost every stage of the present study. The field study faced limitations due to many factors including the fact that Syrian sex workers
work in a criminalized and prohibited sector, their work processes and environments are dominated by intermediaries and in most cases by criminal networks, hesitations of officers of public institutions and agencies to express opinions about the issue in question, invisibility of Syrian sex workers, efforts made by public institutions and organizations to keep the issue invisible.

It has been extremely difficult to reach Syrian sex workers and to engage in an interview with meaningful length and content. A significant majority of Syrians have been pushed into invisibility. Criminalization, domination of intermediaries and fear of being exposed cause Syrian sex workers to move away from actors whom they come across in their daily lives. Thus, it has been extremely difficult to convince many Syrian sex workers to accept the interview.

Contacts of the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association have been used to access Syrian sex workers for interviews. In addition to Syrian sex workers reached by snowball method, we also have been to places such as bars, night clubs, pubs where Syrian sex workers are known to be working and tried to get in touch with Syrian sex workers. At the same time, contacts with Syrian sex workers were also established through referral by NGOs working in the field of refugees providing them with services. Access to Syrian sex workers could also be gained through many Turkish sex workers living in different provinces of Turkey with whom the Red Umbrella is in contact. Finally, as mentioned earlier, Syrian sex workers have also been reached through social media accounts or mobile applications used by them to find partners.

Language has been a major obstacle during the field work. Turkish, English and Arabic were used in communicating with Syrian sex workers. In addition to their mother tongue, a small number of the Syrian sex workers interviewed also speak Turkish which they have learnt during their long stay in Turkey. Turkish was used to interview with Syrian sex workers who can speak good enough Turkish to “get by” in their daily life. A small group of Syrian sex workers interviewed could speak English. Most of them can only speak Arabic. Arabic-speaking Syrian sex workers were reached and interviewed with the support of an interpreter.

One of the major challenges in the fieldwork process is that a certain number of Syrian sex workers are working in criminalized social settings. The team conducting the study needed to talk with and convince intermediaries working with Syrian sex workers to be able to gain access to the latter. In many cases, the study team met reaction and anger of intermediaries, preventing them from meeting Syrian sex workers. In some cases, the field team was threatened indirectly to give up doing this work. In a limited number of interviews, Syrian sex workers were interviewed only with the consent of their intermediaries and in their company. In these interviews, Syrian sex workers did not tell much. In some cases, interviews were conducted with Syrian sex workers with the approval of their intermediaries but without the company of the latter.
No voice recording was done in 6 interviews because sex workers were afraid of being exposed and did not consent. In such cases, the narratives of the interviewee were noted by two people. In other cases, a voice recording could be done and transcribed. The narratives of the persons interviewed by telephone were taken in the company of an Arabic interpreter and voice recordings were taken within their consent. Questions were also sent in writing to persons interviewed via social media accounts and mobile applications and their answers were received in writing.

Almost all of the representatives of the public institutions and agencies interviewed as part of the field study asked that the report do not mention interviews with them. Although the interviews were conducted with necessary permissions, representatives of many public institutions and agencies did not want to be named in the report due to the fear of facing investigations or due to the sensitive nature of information on the issue at hand.

Many public institutions and agencies have refused to discuss the issue. The refusal of interview requests without any justification reveals that there is a serious sensitivity on the issue. We could not meet with some institutions and agencies due to the condition of Syrians in the sex work sector, negative media coverage about the issue, hesitation of public institutions and organizations to cooperate with non-governmental organizations working in the field and many similar reasons.

One of the important limitations during the study is that the number of Syrian sex workers interviewed is lower than foreseen and designed number. Issues raised in this report are based on the data obtained from interviews conducted with 26 Syrian sex workers through various methods. Therefore, the problems and needs expressed in this report are filtered through a qualitative data set. Although the number of Syrian sex workers interviewed turned out to be less than foreseen, many questions have been answered in detail. At the same time, as can be seen in the demographic information section of the report, it can be said that the report is highly representative as it uses stories of Syrian sex workers with different social backgrounds. This report, based on data obtained from interviews with sex workers who live and work in different provinces, from different age groups, sexes and sexual identities, with different income levels, engaged in sex work in different places and with different migration stories, is clearly unprecedented in Turkey and in the region and serves as an important advocacy tool.
SEX WORK UNDER “TEMPORARY PROTECTION”: LEGAL STATUS
SEX WORK UNDER “TEMPORARY PROTECTION”:
LEGAL STATUS

Legislation relating to sex work in Turkey has many different characteristics. While the legislation on sex work in Turkey has a regulatory function on one hand, it also has a prohibitive, preventive and punitive function on the other hand. The fact that sex work legislation has different functions means that the administration develops policies and practices in parallel with abovementioned different functions. While the administration permits formal work places where sex work can be legally done and regulated by strict rules on one hand, it also prohibits instances of sex work done in informal space, punishes sex workers and third parties in the sector and takes preventive measures on the other hand. This demonstrates that there is no holistic and coherent set of policies and practices on sex work.

The fact that sex work is done both in legally registered places and is also prohibited and punished for preventive purposes when it is informal means that sex workers of Turkish nationality face serious legal difficulties. Sex workers, continuously facing administrative and criminal measures, often cannot earn a regular income, are expelled from work places, are removed from their working places, face different cases of administrative sanctions such as closure of houses due to prostitution and administrative fines, are denied accommodation and employment opportunities and thus pushed into poverty. As a result of conditions created by such measures, they deal with insecurity and a cycle of violence in risky work spaces. Legislation motivated by and implemented through an approach of “prostitution prevention” fails to address the workers’ needs based on general health and human rights, which does harm to public health and public order.

Challenges faced by Turkish nationals within the framework of existing legislation and policies are exacerbated when it comes to Syrian sex workers. Difficulties and needs experienced by Syrians in Turkey, who are doing sex work for various reasons, can be revealed by a careful evaluation of the legislation and policies which directly concern sex workers of Turkish nationality on the one hand, and of the legislation and policies which concern refugees in general on the other hand.

Practice of sex work by Turkish nationals and by persons of other nationalities who take refuge in Turkey are assessed by both national legislation and international legislation, particularly through a perspective of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Involvement of Syrians in Turkey in sex industry due to economic difficulties and poverty, various types of violence, lack of alternatives, acts intermingled with organized crimes such as human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children points at an emerging field where the relevant legislation turns out to be inadequate. Equating sex work with crimes against humanity such as human trafficking and com-
Commercial sexual exploitation of children, and practices of legislation implemented through policies developed from this point of view give rise to some obstacles when it comes to solving problems.

There are differences in conceptual and ontological terms between sex work and human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children; for this reason, sex work is distinguished from human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children and is often regarded as an area of informal labour in parallel with national legislation. Mixing up these three phenomena or making policies based on the perception that these three cases are the same with each other lead to the emergence of new unpredictable groups of victims rather than contributing to the protection of victims of criminal acts. For example, defining a Syrian as a victim of human trafficking even when s/he prefers to do sex work of his/her own consent without the influence of a third party, as a work from among limited alternatives would result in an assessment which cannot capture the reality in the field. On the other hand, involvement of persons under the age of 18, in other words of children, in the sex industry, and defining children as sex workers would be ethically, politically and ontologically problematic. In other words, it is a crime of humanity that persons under the age of 18, whether Syrian or not, end up having to exist in the sex industry, and these people need to be supported in many ways by policies addressing their needs. It should be known that legislation and practitioners equating both human trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children with sex work, causes the worsening and not the improvement of conditions of vulnerable groups such as Syrians in the sector.

When assessing the condition of persons in the sex industry, whether or not a Turkish national, it is essential to make case-based assessments and to take steps free from generalizing approaches and interpretations. It is necessary to analyse the social situation of persons in the sex industry, to examine the parties with whom they are in contact in the sector, to evaluate the various difficulties they encounter when entering the sector and to ask them whether or not they want to be in the sector. Categorizing each Syrian as a “victim” based on a generalizing approach and imposing administrative and punitive measures upon them increases the level of victimization, if any, of these persons.

Persons who are not Turkish nationals are not allowed to engage in sex work in Turkey. Many examples of legislation relating to sex work provides for the following measures for persons of foreign nationalities doing sex work in Turkey: placement under administrative detention, conducting relevant medical examinations, especially for sexually transmitted infections, repatriation if they are not victims of human trafficking or victims of other coercive criminal acts. It is clear that the belief and approach that sex work is a “victimization” by itself, especially if practiced informally causes the administration to increase its pressure on these people as a result of the thought that such work cannot be practiced of persons’ own will and consent. However, persons with many different nationalities come to Turkey purposely and do sex work. Therefore, it is necessary to make necessary legislative changes and improve the practice given that these people are migrants and sex workers.
The first of the most important legislation which envisages the regulation of sex work in Turkey on the basis of the principle of protection of public health is the Public Health Law. The Public Health Law provides for taking measures required to ensure and protect public health in Turkey. The law has had a significant influence on the development of other legislative arrangements which outline general health measures for sex workers in Turkey. In this case, it is the main law in this area.

Articles 128 to 132 of the Public Health Law are entitled “provisions on women doing sex work”. Relevant articles set out the basis for the measures to be taken about duly registered women doing sex work. The law obliges the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health to establish a regulation on the basis of the stated principles. It lists in detail which measures should be taken under the regulation in question regarding sexually transmitted infections and other potential infectious diseases in relation to registered woman sex workers.

The Bylaws on General Provisions regarding Brothels and Prostitution and the Fight against Venereal Diseases which entered into force in 1961 on the basis of the Public Health Law regulates in detail the field of sex work, regardless of whether formal or informal. The provisions of the Circular are intended for regulating how brothels, which can be defined as a place of registered sex work, can be established, which procedures need to be followed for the practice of sex work in brothels, what provisions are to be applied for registered woman sex workers, what provisions regulate informal sex work, what administrative measures are to be applied for informal sex workers etc.

Another important legislative arrangement with a direct effect on the sex work and detailing criminal measures against actors in the field is the Turkish Penal Code. Turkish Penal Code does not criminalize sex work. However, almost every act performed by sex workers in order to do that work is punished. This results in de facto criminalization of the practice of sex work.

Article 225 of the Turkish Penal Code criminalizes exhibitionism within the context of indecent acts, while the Article 226 criminalizes obscenity. Both articles are constantly used to target sex workers, since they make a broad definition of exhibitionism and obscenity. Therefore, even if sex work is not defined as a crime, sex workers are punished by means of these articles which are prone to interpretation by law enforcement agencies and judicial units.

According to the Article 227 of the Turkish Penal Code, doing sex work is not an offense; but it is an offense to encourage someone to engage in prostitution, facilitate it, act as
an intermediary or provide a space for prostitution. The third paragraph of the relevant article of the Turkish Criminal Code was revised by lawmakers on 24 November 2016. According to the revision, it is an offence to give, distribute or spread products containing images, texts and words prepared for the purpose of facilitating and acting as an intermediary for prostitution. This has also criminalized the promotion/advertisement of sex work in addition to other acts already defined as offences associated with sex work.

Criminalization -by the Turkish Penal Code- of many acts committed by sex workers when working in the sector affects sex workers’ general health including particularly sexual health and reproductive health. Punishment of sex workers for various reasons makes them more vulnerable in the informal sector. Punishment means that sex workers are forced to seek the protection of intermediaries, are left with no choice but doing sex work in unsafe and unhealthy environments, are exposed to more violence, are impoverished, move away from safe sexual behaviours, and become disconnected from services of health-care and access to justice as a result of decreased confidence in the State. Therefore, the way sex work is regulated by the legislation creates a serious impact on sex workers’ health situation, their security in all aspects, and therefore on the public health and public security.

Article 227 of the Turkish Penal Code, intended for preventing exploitation of children in the sex industry,criminalizes acts of encouraging children to engage in prostitution, facilitating or acting as an intermediary for prostitution of children. Therefore, the law envisages criminal sanctions against commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Article 80 of the Turkish Penal Code criminalizes human trafficking. The Turkish Penal Code, criminalizing the trafficking of human beings for prostitution with other forms of trafficking, aims at effectively punishing the commercial sexual exploitation of children as well as human trafficking.

The most obvious and systematic administrative sanction imposed on sex workers are based on the Misdemeanours Law\footnote{Law on Misdemeanors (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5326.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017} and the Road Traffic Law. Sex workers working informally as sex workers are punished with administrative fines by law enforcement officers, regardless of whether they do sex work indoors or outdoors.

Articles 32, 36 and 37 of the MisdemeanoursLaw\footnote{Misdemeanours Law (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.326.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017} define disobedience of order, making noise and disturbing other people as misdemeanours. Sex workers are faced with administrative fines on grounds of committing such misdemeanours. Various Articles of the Road Traffic Law\footnote{Road Traffic Law (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.2918.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017} result in sex workers being punished on grounds that they disrupt traffic, invade sidewalks and put traffic in danger. It is documented by the reports of the non-governmental organizations working in the field and decisions of competent courts that law enforcement agencies act in an arbitrary and unlawful manner when enforcing both laws.
The use of the Misdemeanours Law and the Road Traffic Law to administratively punish the sex workers has negative effects on the general health and security of sex workers and of public in general. Continuously subjected to administrative fines by law enforcement officers, sex workers cannot negotiate with their clients for the use of condoms, cannot assess their customers regarding potential violence, and are forced to start working in unsafe parts of the city and with organized criminal groups to stay away from continuous police inspections. Hence, arbitrary and unlawful use of administrative sanctions causes proliferation of organized criminal groups and deterioration of public order on one hand and pushes sex workers to work in unsafe, unhealthy and uncontrolled environments on the other, therefore harming public health.19

Law enforcement officers have a very important role to play to establish public order by monitoring the conduct of sex work in accordance with the provisions of the Circular on General Provisions regarding Brothels and Prostitution and the Fight against Venereal Disease. At this point, the powers of the police force, the gendarmerie and coastguard units are important. Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Law on the Duties and Powers of the Police20, authorizes security forces to inspect various places and businesses, including spaces where sex work is done.

Regulation on Business Licenses21 has a direct impact on places where informal sex work is done. Sex work is informally and illegally done in many places. There are many testimonies, reports and judicial records that sex work is also done in businesses established and operating with licenses obtained from relevant public agencies. It is known that particularly in some of the nightclubs and similar places of entertainment, sex workers bargain with clients or some people act as intermediaries for sex work. Functions such as inspection of these places, taking sanitary measures, closure or temporary suspension of businesses which are unlicensed or fail in sanitary inspections are carried out by relevant officials on the basis of the aforementioned regulation.

Regulation on Procedures Applicable to Businesses which have to obtain a Licence for Operation22 introduces important rules about public places of entertainment where some of the sex workers find clients. The regulation in question introduces a requirement of official medical reports to determine whether persons working in nightclubs, bars and similar places have sexually transmitted infections, while also introducing procedures for licensing or suspension in connection with administrative inspections to determine whether these businesses engage in illegal activities.

19 For a detailed assessment of the negative social and economic consequences resulting from the implementation of both laws, see “Kayıtlı Alanda Kayıtsız Soygun” (Informal Robbery in Formal Space), http://kirmizisemsiye.org/Dosyalar/KayıtsızAlandaKayıtsızSoygun.pdf
20 Law on Functions and Powers of the Police (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.2559.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017
21 Regulations Regarding Starting Businesses and Operation Licenses (Turkish), http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2005/08/20050810-4.htm, Access Date: 18.05.2017
22 Regulation on Procedures Applicable to Businesses Which have to Obtain a Licence for Operation (Turkish), http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2003/12/20031221.htm, Access Date: 18.05.2017
Both the Regulation on Business Licences and the Regulation on Procedures Applicable to Businesses which have to obtain a Licence for Operation introduce certain obligations on businesses where informal sex work is done and on persons who work at these businesses to prevent breach of legislation. It is clear that these regulations, with important functions for establishing public health and public order, restrict informal sex work sector, imposes additional working requirements on sex workers working in these businesses, and put sex workers under the domination of intermediaries. This harms sex workers’ health and public health.

When it comes to issues as supervision, licensing, granting of operation permits or suspension of places and businesses where sex work is done, particularly of brothels, it is necessary to carefully examine the Special Provincial Administration Law, Law on Metropolitan Municipalities, Law on Municipalities and Land Development Law. Abovementioned laws follow regulatory and supervisory procedures developed to the extent possible on the basis of principal laws detailed previously, directly regulating or punishing sex work.

Social security is an important factor to strengthen sex workers’ access to general health services, particularly sexual health and reproductive health. Only a small minority of sex workers in Turkey are entitled to be covered by social security as a result of sex work they do. These are the women defined in Public Health Law under the Social Insurance and Universal Health Insurance Law Article 4. In other words, sex workers who work in legally established and supervised brothels have the right to be covered by healthcare insurance as mentioned in the law in question. Although the relevant law covers only a small group of people working in brothels, the relevant article is indisputably an important achievement for sex workers in terms of having social security. Nonetheless, sex workers demand that social security be also legally made available for informal sex workers who accept to be registered as sex workers.

Law on Foreigners and International Protection, laying down rules for the stay, residence, work and protection of various reasons of foreigners, contains articles intended for ensuring access of asylum seekers, persons under temporary protection or human trafficking victims to services available to Turkish nationals. Registration, accommodation, provision of relevant services, etc. concerning Syrians in Turkey under temporary protection status are governed by relevant articles of Law on Foreigners and International Protection.

23 Special Provincial Administration Law (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.5302.pdf, Access date: 18.05.2017
24 Law on Metropolitan Municipalities (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.5216.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017
25 Law on Municipalities (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.5393.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017
26 Land Development Law (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.3194.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017
27 Social Insurance and Universal Health Insurance Law (Turkish), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.5510.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017
28 Foreigners and International Protection Law (Turkish), http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/goc_kanun.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017
International Protection. Therefore, the Law is the main reference point for all other issues that intersect with migration and asylum in Turkey.

Another important reference point is the **Temporary Protection Regulation**\(^{29}\), issued on the basis of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection No. 6458, directly relating to Syrians in Turkey, and effective since 22 October 2014 upon the decision of the Council of Ministers. The Regulation lays down principles regarding foreigners who come to Turkey in masses and in need of urgent international protection. The Regulation, laying down principles applicable to those whose international protection applications cannot be taken into consideration individually, provides detailed information on procedures applicable for Syrians under temporary protection such as registration, referrals, procedures at temporary accommodation centres, procedures applicable for host communities, access to services, protection and support activities and so on.

The Law on Foreigners and International Protection is of great importance in terms of the principle of “non-refoulement” expressed in fundamental international conventions relating to refugee rights. Article 4 of the Section Two of the Law reads: "No one who fall under the scope of this Law shall be returned to a place where he or she may be subject to torture, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment, or where his or her life or freedom may be under threat on account of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion " However, Article 54, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph(ç) rules that "Those who make a living through illegitimate means during their stay in Turkey” and subparagraph (d) “those who constitute a threat to public order and security or public health” can be deported. It is a fact that the public administration is usually using the interpretation that sex workers make a living through “illegitimate” means or “damage public order, public security or public health” and consequently persons who seek refuge in Turkey are being deported or attempts are made to deport people on these grounds.

Details of periods for appealing to relevant courts against decisions taken by the administration regarding the deportation of persons or groups mentioned in the article 54, Paragraph 1 are mentioned in the Article 53 of the same law. This Article reads, "The foreigner, his or her legal representative or his or her lawyer may appeal to the administrative court against the deportation decision within fifteen days as of the date of notification. The person who has appealed the decision shall also inform the authority that has issued the deportation decision about the appeal lodged to the court. Applications to the court shall be concluded in fifteen days. The decision of the court on the issue shall be final. In case of an appeal or in the term of litigation, the foreigner shall not be deported until the finalization of the judgment, without prejudice to the consent of the foreigner.”

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\(^{29}\) [Temporary Protection Regulation](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/03052014_6883.pdf), Access Date: 18.05.2017
Chapter entitled “Arrangements Relating to Security” of the Decree Law Introducing Certain Arrangements as part of the State of Emergency no 676 issued and promulgated in the Official Gazette on October 2, 2016, has amended some of the articles mentioned above which guarantee the non-refoulement of foreigners in Turkey. This amendment has revised the Article 54, Paragraph 2 as follows: "A deportation decision may be taken at any time during any stage of international protection proceedings against applicants for international protection or persons holding international protection falling under the category of subparagraphs (b), (d) and (k) of the first paragraph of this Article." According to the relevant arrangement, the principle of non-refoulement is suspended in respect of persons mentioned in the abovementioned subparagraphs, making it possible to deport persons who are applicants for international protection or holders of international protection status during issuance and enforcement stages of deportation order or during court proceedings following the order. This situation can target those who have taken refuge in Turkey and make a living by doing sex work as mentioned above.

International conventions have a significant influence on national legislation when it comes to regulating sex work, human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children or asylum. The legislation formulated by the Republic of Turkey regarding particularly human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children and refugee law has been assessed and designed within the framework of relevant conventions of the United Nations and Council of Europe, additional protocols to these conventions or resolutions of their relevant units. In this respect, it is extremely important to also consider pieces of international legislation while assessing legal texts relating to the issue.

**United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**

Article 24 rules that refugees lawfully staying in a country have the right to benefit equally from all protection and support services accorded to nationals of that country. Article 33 of the same Convention states that no Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in anymanner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Relevant articles of this Convention cover refugee sex workers.

When assessing sex workers’ access to services and improvement of their human rights standards, it would also be useful to consider conventions issued by the United Nations to eliminate commercial sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking and ratified by contracting states.

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30 Decree No. 676 on Introduction of Certain Arrangements under State of Emergency (Turkish), http://www.resmi-gazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/10/20161029-5.htm, Access Date: 18.05.2017

31 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Turkish), http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/multec%C4%B1ler%C4%B1nhukuk%C4%B1statusune%C4%B1%4B1sk%C4%B1nozlesme.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017
Article 34 of the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of the Child\(^{32}\) rules that States Parties have to take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent: The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

The same Convention obliges States to ensure that every child, whether or not in the case of abuse, unconditionally benefit from health, social security, care and similar support services. This also includes children who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Optional Protocol to the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography\(^{33}\) details the acts mentioned in the Convention, which emphasize commercial sexual exploitation of children, and makes it obligatory for member states to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children and guarantee that child victims have access to all forms of protection and support mechanisms.

Convention no 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour\(^{34}\) issued by the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO), signed and ratified by the States makes it obligatory for contracting states to take measures to protect child victims and to prohibit the use of children for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances.

International conventions and protocols established for the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children in the sex industry and for protecting and supporting child victims underline the importance of children’s benefiting from all kinds of services, including health-care services, for protecting and supporting physical and mental health of child victims.

There are also examples of binding legislation on human trafficking, a phenomenon not the same as sex work, which needs to be assessed in addition to commercial exploitation of children and can have potential effects on sex workers. The first and most comprehensive of such legislation is United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, abbreviated as Palermo Convention\(^{35}\), adopt-
Syrians Under “Temporary Protection” in Turkey and Sex Work

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children\textsuperscript{36} supplementing this Convention aims to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children; to protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights; and to promote cooperation among States Parties in order to meet those objectives.\textsuperscript{37}

In addition to the United Nations’ relevant conventions, the Council of Europe, of which Turkey is a founding member, has also issued and adopted conventions in order to effectively combat human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The Council of Europe Convention of 2007 on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse\textsuperscript{38}, which aims to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children and to protect and support victims, has been established and ratified in order for the member states to effectively fight against commercial sexual exploitation of children, to protect and support victims and punish perpetrators. As part of an effective fight against human trafficking, Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings\textsuperscript{39} has been signed and ratified by the States Parties to effectively fight against human trafficking and to protect and support victims.

It is known that sex work is not defined on the basis of a certain tendency within any of the regional political organizations such as the United Nations or the Council of Europe. It should be noted that there is not a single approach and that each member state, members of such international political organizations, regulates sex work through different legal approaches. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about a uniform regional or global legal or political approach in relation to sex work, unlike human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children. From a global point of view, it is observed that some states have completely decriminalized sex work including third parties in the sector, while some others have legalized sex work to register it and have established supervisory rules. On the other hand, many states punish sex work partially or fully by distinguishing formal from informal. As explained at the beginning of this chapter by emphasizing the examples of relevant legislation, the legislation in Turkey includes both punitive, prohibitive, preventive and legalizing and regulatory elements.

\textsuperscript{36} Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, http://www.uhdigm.adalet.gov.tr/suggam/sozlesmeler/8%C4%B0RLE%5E%C5%9EM%C4%B0%C5%9E%20M%C4%B0LETILER/227-%20S%C4%B1n%C4%B1ra%C5%9Fan%20%C3%96rg%C3%BC%C3%BC%20Su%C3%A7lara%20Kar%C5%9F%C4-%B1%20BM%20S%C3%B6zlesmesi%20ve%20%20Protokolleri%20.pdf, Access date: 18.05.2017

\textsuperscript{37} For a list of main international conventions and protocols on combating human trafficking and commercial sexual abuse of children, which Turkey is a party, see the website of the Directorate General of Migration Management (Turkish): http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/turkiyenin-insan-ticaretiyle-mucadelesi_409_561_563

\textsuperscript{38} Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Turkish), http://www.sck.gov.tr/usp/Avrupa%20Konseyi%20%C3%87ocuklar%C4%B1n%C3%B6r%C3%B6m%C3%B6%C3%B6%C3%BÇ%C3%BC%20Su%C3%A7lara%20Kar%C5%9F%C4-B1%20%20Protokolleri%20.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017

\textsuperscript{39} The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Human Trafficking (Turkish), http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/04/20160407-16.pdf, Access Date: 18.05.2017
Although there is no definite trend towards sex work at the global or regional level on the basis of legislation, the International Labour Organization defines sex work as a field of labour that must be assessed at formal and informal levels.\textsuperscript{40} In addition, detailed reports published by the United Nations AIDS Joint Program (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Agency (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Health Organization (WHO) covering cross-cutting issues of sex work, HIV, migration and similar issues state that sex work should be decriminalized and that punitive laws prevent all sex workers, including migrant sex workers, from having access to services in all fields, particularly to health-care services.

\textsuperscript{40} ILO Recommendation No. 200 on HIV and AIDS, \url{http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=normlexpub:12100::no::p12100_ilo_code:r200}, Access Date: 18.05.2017
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

It is crucial to accurately examine demographic information on Syrian sex workers interviewed in Turkey so that their general health and human rights situation can be properly assessed. There is a set of important information considered for effectively assessing Syrian sex workers’ general health and human rights condition in Turkey. This set of information includes how long they are in sex industry, reasons for entry into the sector, when they entered the sector, their gender and sexual identity, provinces and places where they work, Syrian city where they used to live before migrating to Turkey, information on third parties with whom they are in contact in the sex industry, income they earn in the sector, their age, civil status, the number of children they have, whether or not they are under temporary protection status, their general health situation, whether they use alcohol and/or drugs etc.

The Syrian sex workers interviewed used to live in the following Syrian provinces before coming to Turkey: Aleppo (8), Idlib (5), Raqqa (3), Latakia (2), Hama (2), Homs (2), Deirez-Zor (1), Damascus (1), Qobani (1), al-Hasakah (1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY IN SYRIA</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PERSONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aleppo</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idlib</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raqqa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latakia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hama</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deirez-Zor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qobani</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Hasakah</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 of the Syrian sex workers interviewed declared that they came to Turkey in 2013, 8 in 2012, 4 in 2014 and 2 in 2015. A great majority of Syrian sex workers in Turkey came to Turkey during the first two years of the war in Syria.

At the time of the interview, Syrian sex workers interviewed were living in the following cities: 12 people in Istanbul, 4 people in Izmir, 3 people in Gaziantep, 2 people in Ankara, 2 people in Mersin, 1 person in Hatay, 1 person in Adana, 1 person in Bursa. An important piece of information obtained during the study is that some of the Syrian sex workers are mobile and go from one city to another to work. Therefore, the information about the city where Syrian sex workers live may change over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY WHERE THE PERSON LIVES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PERSONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>İstanbul</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izmir</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaziantep</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankara</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mersin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatay</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursa</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Care has been taken to interview sex workers from different genders and gender identities. Women, men or trans-sex workers have different experiences. For this reason, while interviewing Syrian sex workers, it is important to raise different experiences. In this context, 14 of the Syrian sex workers interviewed define themselves as trans women, while 4 define themselves as gay men. Remaining 8 people define themselves as non-trans women sex workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PERSONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-trans</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The age distribution of the Syrian sex workers interviewed is as follows: 5 persons in the age group 18 - 25; 11 in the age group 26 - 30; 7 in the age group 31 - 40 and 3 in the age group 41 - 50. According to these data, 61% of Syrian sex workers interviewed are between 18 and 30 years old and young.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE RANGE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PERSONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 – 30</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 of the 26 Syrian sex workers stated that they did sex work full-time. Sex workers in this group have no other source of income other than sex work. The remaining 5 sex workers declared that they did sex work part-time and did other jobs too. Sex workers in this group do the following jobs: textile work, cleaning, waitressing - dishwashing, peddling.

The income earned from sex work by Syrian sex workers interviewed is as follows: 7 persons earn from 500 to 1000 TL; 7 persons from 1001 to 2000 TL; 10 persons from 2001 to 3000 TL; 2 persons earn more than 3000 TL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME RANGE (TL)</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PERSONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500-1000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001 - 2000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 - 3000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3,000 TL</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that a significant number of Syrian sex workers are working with intermediaries, it would be difficult to say that the range of income reported by sex workers interviewed is the net amount they get themselves on a monthly basis. A certain amount of the mentioned amount is handed over to intermediaries and sex workers earn an amount lower than the reported amount.

“I make an average of 2500 TL a month. It is my brother (not a family member, calling the intermediary “brother”) who procures me clients. I wait at home, when there is a client, my brother gives me a call telling me who will come and how much money I will get. I usually get between 50 - 70 TL. I have to give a third of this money to the brother. The rest is what is left to me. That amount
Syrians Under “Temporary Protection” in Turkey and Sex Work

12 of the Syrian sex workers interviewed reported working with intermediaries. 5 of the sex workers working with intermediaries are non-trans woman sex workers, and 7 are transwoman sex workers. None of the Syrian man sex workers interviewed work with intermediaries. Intermediaries of all the non-trans woman sex workers working with intermediaries are men. While these intermediaries are sometimes business owners who agree with Syrian sex workers to find clients and get a commission, and are sometimes exclusively panderers who find customers for Syrian sex workers and gain all their income from sex workers. These people include spouses or male partners of Syrian non-trans woman sex workers.

“We work with my husband. He finds me clients, and I stay with them. My husband rents apartments for daily rent, I stay there with the clients. We cannot bring them home, we don’t want to entangle our children in that dishonour. I have 4 children; the income we make is hardly enough to look after them.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 39, İstanbul

While intermediaries of some of the trans woman sex workers interviewed are Turkish trans woman sex workers, and those of some others are the owners of entertainment clubs where these sex workers find clients. There may also be a relationship of class-based domination between Syrian trans-woman sex workers and Turkish trans-woman sex workers. 4 of the Syrian trans woman sex workers interviewed work with Turkish trans woman sex workers and give them a part of their income.

“My boss is a trans woman like me. She’s older than me. When I first came to Ankara, I wanted to look like a woman and exist as such. I ran away from my family. A trans-woman I met here took me under her patronage. I started to go out to the street with her to work. She drives the car, and I stay with clients. She’s taking half of the money I earn. Thank God I earn money.”

Trans woman sex worker, 23, Ankara

All of the Syrian non-trans woman sex workers interviewed have children. Out of the 8 Syrian non-trans woman sex workers, the one with the fewest children had 3 children. The legal spouse of 4 of the 8 Syrian non-trans woman sex workers interviewed act as their intermediary.
Syrians Under “Temporary Protection” in Turkey and Sex Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF PERSONS</th>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>INTERMEDIARY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER FAMILY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 persons</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Legal spouse</td>
<td>3 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 persons</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Legal spouses</td>
<td>4 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 people</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Legal spouse</td>
<td>6 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 person</td>
<td>Widow/widower</td>
<td>Partner (boyfriend)</td>
<td>2 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Syrian sex workers interviewed were asked an open-ended question as to why they entered the sex industry. The question was, “Why are you doing sex work?” An open-ended question was asked to assess the perspective of the sex workers interviewed regarding the sector and to measure their motivation in entering the sector.

Responses of the interviewees suggest differences between the reasons for the entry of the Syrian sex workers into the sex industry. Some sex workers reported they did not prefer to enter the sector, but they were dragged into the sector by other actors, while others stated that they have entered the sector of their own choice, knowingly - in particular to cope with economic problems they face. The stories of some of the interviewees began with a chain of events corresponding to human trafficking. Their stories also reveal opinions suggesting they “preferred” to stay in the sector later on. Some people declared that they were forced to marry other people when a child, and that they entered the sector as a result of negative experiences they went through after these informal marriages. A few people who reported being a victim of commercial sexual exploitation at the beginning of their story said that this job has now become their own profession.

“My mother is ill and we are 6 siblings. My father died in the war in Syria. We’ve come all the way here without anyone else. I am the oldest boy in the family. In our customs, the duty of looking after the family lies with the eldest boy. I need to look after my siblings and my mother. “

Man sex worker, 24, Ankara

“The government has not looked after us, which is why we are doing this now … Turkey opened the door to us; that, by itself, is not enough. There should be a bread to be brought home. As there was no bread to be brought home, I had no choice but to work to look after my children. I have 3 children, who will take care of them?“

Non-trans woman sex worker, 40, İzmir

“I used to do this job in Syria too, it is not something I started here. This has been my job for about 3 years. I started doing this work here when the war broke out in Syria. Of course I was not disguised as a woman in Syria, I was an effeminate man. Now I can be a woman.”

Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul
“I like doing this work, actually. It's not an easy job, it involves some challenges. But I can do it. I took up this job willingly. Well, I make good money. I can survive while there are a lot of Syrians hungry.”

Trans woman sex worker, 25, Izmir

“We came to Turkey with all the members of the family. They put us in one of the camps. At first it was nice, at least there was no war. Then, some Turks started to come to see the young girls of the families in the camp. As families had no money, they were selling their daughters for money. They told me a 56-year-old man saw me and liked me. He was a worthless piece of shit. My family sold me to him for a few thousand TL. He had another wife. She was older than me. I was just 16 years old. I’m now 21. He constantly beat me up, his brothers wanted to have sex with me. I raised my voice, I got beat up. Everybody, including the women in the family, beat me up. A guy in the neighbourhood helped me to escape, gave me some money. I took a coach and came to a big city. Here, people I met suggested that I do this job, and I started to do it.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 21, Adana

“Because I was a trans woman and I wanted to look like a woman, my family despised me. My elder brother used to beat me up a lot. I escaped, I went to the coach station without any money in my pocket. I had no money to take the coach, but I slept with the coach attendant. He found a way and took me to Izmir. I’ve met other trans women here. I used to hear other talking about it. I got to know them and started to work with them.”

Trans woman sex worker, 25, Izmir

“My husband forced me into this work, I cried a lot. I did not want to do it, but on the other hand, our house had no source of income. Children were hungry. The aid we received was not enough. My husband is now away from me, he’s gone to another country. I have a brother (referring to her intermediary as brother), he finds clients, and I work. I am keeping the pot boiling.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 37, Hatay

“My husband died in war in Syria. I had to take the children and flee as the war got closer to our neighbourhood. On the way, the journey was so hard without any food or water. We needed to give money to smugglers carrying us to the border. As I had no money, I had no choice but to sleep with two people who carried us. Then with others when crossing the border. After a while you realize that you can make money out of this. There are actually many people making money using us. Smugglers, gendarmerie... I am now working on my own. I’m earning money. I’ve had a share of difficulties, but that is life”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 42, Mersin

A significant majority of Syrian sex workers interviewed said they found clients in places like bars, night clubs, beer houses, chicha cafes etc. Some Syrian sex workers use daily rental or long term rental flats or hotels to see clients arranged by their intermediaries.
Only 7 of the Syrian sex workers interviewed stated that they went out to the street to find clients.

24 of the 26 Syrian sex workers are under temporary protection status. In other words, 24 Syrian sex workers have temporary protection identity cards. 2 Syrian sex workers, on the other hand, do not have a temporary protection ID card. One of the two persons reported not being able to apply to authorities concerning the abuse of which s/he was victim, that s/he feared being subjected to violence should the intermediary find it out, while the other Syrian sex worker said s/he had no family or a permanent friend, therefore did not know where to apply.

20 of the 26 Syrian sex workers interviewed reported consuming alcohol every day. Again, 11 of the 26 Syrian sex workers reported using drugs. When asked whether or not they used drugs, Syrian sex workers felt uneasy. 5 of the interviewees did not want to answer the question.

“I drink at least 3 - 4 beers every day. That is how I’m going out on the street. Of course, the girls I work with also drink more every day. I sometimes go over the limit. I also smoke marijuana in dens. Then I feel stoned and forget all my worries.”

Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul

“I smoke marijuana in dens. I loved a man when I came here, he was not smoking it at first, but his friends hooked him on it. Over time, I started smoking it. Actually, I do not want to, but I do not have the strength to make an effort to quit.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 42, Mersin
B. KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF SYRIAN SEX WORKERS ABOUT ACCESS TO SERVICES

One of the primary goals of this report is to identify the level of knowledge of Syrian sex workers about basic health services and general human rights condition. Interviewers asked Syrian sex workers questions about basic information on general health conditions, particularly sexual health, as well as on the mechanisms accessible to them after exposure to violations.

An important part of Syrian sex workers interviewed do not have sufficient knowledge on general health conditions including particularly sexual health nor on justice mechanisms. This situation means that Syrian sex workers have limited access to various services they need and they lead their lives as a vulnerable population group.

There are many reasons why Syrian sex workers have limited access to information and services in various fields, resulting in their being in a worse condition as compared to non-sex worker Syrian population when it comes to sexual health, reproductive health and human rights situations. Syrian sex workers live in a spiral of invisibility. Their daily life experiences being pushed to invisibility, the violations of rights to which Syrian sex workers are exposed to also become invisible. Syrian sex workers need access to information and services, and these needs are not recognized because of their invisibility. In addition to invisibility, many Syrian sex workers are subjected to heavy discrimination and violence. Syrian sex workers, who are subjected to discrimination and violence, are pushed to the periphery of the society. While social and economic exclusion bring poverty and insecurity on one hand, and constrain Syrian sex workers’ access to information they need on the other hand.

The fact that they do sex work informally, in other words work in a prohibited sector carrying punishment and are under temporary protection, results in their being criminalized more than sex workers of Turkish nationality. Criminalization may prevent Syrian sex workers from receiving services from various institutions and agencies, particularly from the State. Many Syrian sex workers who have to cope with their perception and acceptance of being criminals also lose confidence in the State because of “anti-prostitution” operations of law enforcement officials. There are many Syrian sex workers who have a common belief that they cannot receive any service because they are sex workers.

Many Syrian sex workers work with intermediaries in the sector. The potential dominance of intermediaries over Syrian sex workers may also prevent the access of the latter to the services and information they need. Knowing that intermediaries are sometimes perpetrators of discrimination and violence, we can say that the access to justice mechanisms or other necessary services are being limited for Syrian sex workers, who have to work with intermediaries, due to their fear of the latter.
Many Syrian sex workers do sex work under heavy conditions. Many Syrian sex workers, who, in most cases, are paid less than sex workers of Turkish nationality, end up having to provide services to more clients. Where there is a high level of economic exploitation by intermediaries, many Syrian sex workers are forced to serve their clients for longer periods of time. Due to the intensive work schedule and socioeconomic conditions surrounding them, many Syrian sex workers cannot have access to services they need.

One of the most important reasons why Syrian sex workers have limited access to services and information on general health including particularly sexual health and human rights situation is the lack of needs analyses done taking into account the sensitivities of this group and lack of programs developed based on these needs. The limited access to information and services for Syrian sex workers with or without temporary protection status in Turkey is mainly attributable to the lack of programs for effective outreach to this group and the lack of policies for referral to services developed to address their needs. Not only public institutions and organizations, but also the majority of non-governmental organizations working on refugees and migration, do not carry out any work on this group’s access to the information and services they need.

The knowledge level of Syrian sex workers interviewed on basic sexual health is extremely low. For example, when asked whether they use condoms when having sex with their clients, only 8 of the 26 Syrian sex workers interviewed reported regularly using condoms. 5 of the Syrian sex workers who use condoms on a regular basis are trans woman sex workers and 3 are man sex workers. None of the non-trans woman sex workers has reported regularly using condoms. It can be said that the rate of condom use as a means of protection against sexually transmitted infections is higher among trans woman sex workers and man sex workers than that of non-trans woman sex workers.

Only 2 of Syrian sex workers who use condoms during sexual intercourse with their clients reported using condoms during sex with their non-client sex partners. When asked why they did not use condoms during sexual intercourse with their non-client sex partners, all the Syrian sex workers interviewed declared they “trusted their partners”. This suggests that sex workers from this group do not have accurate and complete information about sexually transmitted infections, even if they use condoms during sex with their clients.

“I always use condom when I’m with my clients. Because I do not want to be ill. I know most of the other girls who work do not use condoms. Some of them have contracted infections. Working to make money, they do not take care of themselves.”

Trans woman sex worker, 25, Izmir

“I’m putting a condom on my clients. But I do not put one on my boyfriend; no need to do that. He does not sleep with others. He’s always next to me. I trust him. He does not have any illness anyway.”

Man sex worker, 27, Istanbul
“My husband (referring to his boyfriend) would get angry with me if I put a condom on him. He would think I do not trust him. As I use condoms with all my clients, he trusts me too. No chance we have HIV.”

**Trans woman sex worker, 23, Ankara**

Syrian sex workers who do not use condoms in their sexual intercourse with clients or with non-client sex partners explain why they do not use condoms for various reasons.

“For us, there should be direct flesh contact to get pleasure. My husband would beat me if I suggested we use that stuff. He would think I insult him. Clients would not want it either. I have to make money.”

**Non-trans woman sex worker, 39, Gaziantep**

“I heard it from somewhere. I want to use it, but my husband (acting also as her intermediary) would not let me. Clients generally do not want it. My husband does not let me use it fearing clients would not come any longer. That’s why I do not use it. “

**Non-trans woman sex worker, 39, İstanbul**

“I do not like putting it. I do not enjoy it then. Clients don’t enjoy it either. I put it a few times, then I stopped putting it. It’s been a long time since I have been working without using condoms. Nothing has ever happened. I check how the client looks like when I go home. I look at his photo on the mobile. I do not stay with him if I suspect something. That’s how I protect myself.”

**Man sex worker, 27, İstanbul**

Many Syrian sex workers interviewed have limited knowledge of where they can receive services if ever they are infected with a sexually transmitted infection. 14 of the 26 Syrian sex workers interviewed stated that they would go to the family health centre in the neighbourhood in case of any health problem. However, the interviewees state that they say so because it is the only health-care providing centre that they know. In other words, Syrian sex workers who say they would apply to the family health centres do not know to which centre they should apply to in case of which health problem. When talking about family health centres, 2 Syrian sex workers interviewed specifically talked about migrant health centres designed to serve Syrians in their neighbourhoods.

“Everyone in the neighbourhood goes there. It is nice to design it especially for Syrians, because the queue is too long at other hospitals. It is also crowded at the centres, but at least if you have a problem, everyone speaks the same language, you can ask questions. There are more people who speak Arabic.”

**Non-trans woman sex worker, 42, Mersin**

Other Syrian sex workers interviewed said they would go to “the nearest state hospital”. When asked whether they knew to which outpatient clinic in these hospitals they should apply, they stated that they would go to “the emergency” or “hospital’s consultation desk” to inquire.
When asked if they knew to which health centre they should go for testing and counselling on sexually transmitted diseases, none of the Syrian sex workers interviewed has mentioned about centres offering anonymous HIV testing and counselling services. Syrian sex workers interviewed have never heard about these centres before.

3 Syrian sex workers interviewed indicated that a non-governmental organization they had previously consulted for registration had referred them to a state hospital close to the neighbourhood for general medical examination and monitoring. The same people also said that some non-governmental organizations offered counselling on health-care.

“We went to a centre, got registered and then were referred to a nurse. The nurse took good care of us, she answered questions I asked. But the centre was very crowded and there were other questions I wanted to ask. I could not get a response to those questions. Actually, it’s nice to have such places other than hospitals, but they attended to us superficially.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 40, İzmir

Syrian non-trans woman sex workers interviewed were asked whether they used any contraceptive method. All of the 8 non-trans woman sex workers stated that they used contraceptive pills. When asked whether or not that method was effective, 3 of the 8 non-trans woman sex workers said they had become pregnant after sexual intercourse with their clients and that they had an abortion through referral by their intermediaries. Of the 3 non-trans woman sex workers who had an abortion, 1 reported having had an abortion twice, one of them 3 times and the other just once. 2 of the 8 non-trans sex workers reported having had a still birth.

“I use pills, I take them from another woman who does the same work. As far as I know, she gets it from the pharmacy. I don’t go to the pharmacy nor to a doctor. I fear. It would be so shameful if this is revealed.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 21, Adana

“I have been using this pill for a long time. There was a time when I felt very depressed, I could not use it regularly. I did not want to use it. One day I realized I was pregnant. My husband knows I’m using these pills. He thought no way I would get pregnant. I thought so. I worked for 3 months while I was pregnant. Then I had to tell it. My husband was very angry, he beat me up. I felt very bad. Was it because I stopped taking the pill for a while, or the pill was not working. Willy-nilly, we found a doctor. It was hard for me to have an abortion because the deadline had expired; but we pulled some strings. I had an abortion right away. I already have children, and no way I would have a child from a man I do not know. I started working again a few days after the abortion. I have no choice but to make money.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 40, İzmir

When asked why they only used pills as a contraceptive method, all of the 8 non-trans woman sex workers said they used that method because they heard it from other Syrian sex workers. When asked whether or not they knew other contraceptive methods like spirals or condoms, they replied they did not hear about them or did not know how to use
them, that they did not receive counselling or did not know whether they were suitable for the use of such methods.

Syrian sex workers have limited information on general health services, including particularly sexual health. Taken together with the above mentioned socioeconomic conditions, it can be understood that Syrian sex workers have more limited access to information and services compared to the general Syrian population. As for Syrian sex workers who know about health centres, they have access to this information through neighbours, other sex workers, intermediaries or from some non-governmental organizations. However, the information they have is not about to which health units to go in which health problem, but just about the existence of these health units. As for many Syrian sex workers who are aware of the availability of health-care services, their access to these services is extremely limited due to many reasons, as described in the following sections.

In addition to a limited level of information about sexual, reproductive health and general health condition, Syrian sex workers also have limited knowledge of their general human rights situation. In particular, when asked about what mechanisms they should apply to after any violations of rights, only a very small part of the Syrian sex workers know where to apply and offer ideas about preventive and protective mechanisms.

When asked where to apply in case of being a victim of violence, all of the 26 Syrian sex workers interviewed stated that they could apply to police centres. However, when we asked whether they would go to police centres in case of being a victim of violence, only 5 of the 26 Syrian sex workers interviewed said they would indeed go to a police centre. Therefore, it was found that Syrian sex workers were aware of law enforcement agencies as post-violence protective mechanisms, but may not want to ask for help from law enforcement. When asked why they did not want to apply to police stations, Syrian sex workers mentioned many reasons: a. Fear of being uncovered because they are sex workers, b. Ill-treatment and discrimination to which they have previously been exposed in their contact with the police, c. Fear of being sent back to their country or withdrawal of the temporary ID cards, d. Fear that their family members may find out that they do sex work or discover their sexual identity, e. The idea that justice will not be served even if they apply to law enforcement agencies, f. The idea that their intermediary would stop them or harm them, etc.

“I would not go to the police, and I would get into trouble there. My brother (referring to her intermediary) would protect me. If the police finds out I’m doing this, they would send me back to Syria. They do not like us anyway.”

*Non-trans woman sex worker, 37, Hatay*

“The thing I fear most is getting caught by the police. They treat us badly. They insult us. They always call us faggots. They keep us waiting in the police station for a long time. If I were beaten by someone, I would not apply to the police. I would call my friends, we would find a way.”

*Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul*
4 of the Syrian sex workers interviewed stated that they if they encountered any discrimination or acts of violence, they would apply to non-governmental organizations which had previously provided them with services. They said that it was more reassuring for them to apply to non-governmental organizations rather than directly applying to law enforcement officials or prosecutors’ offices and that non-governmental organizations can offer free services and this would spare them economic difficulties.

“There is ASAM here. If something occurred to me, I would contact them. I do not trust the police. ASAM staff understands us a bit. They do not know about the job I do, I have not told them; but they would not treat me like a cop.”

**Man sex worker, 24, Ankara**

None of the Syrian sex workers interviewed are aware of the legal aid offices of the bar associations in the city where they live. None of the 26 Syrian sex workers has a lawyer. In addition, they have little information about mechanisms of access to justice except police stations, prosecutors’ offices and some non-governmental organizations.

“I know where to go if I get beaten, but I would not go there. Why would I go to the police station? I would get into more trouble, I would not be able to work again. What’s more, I have no money for a lawyer, I heard they charge a lot of money.”

**Trans woman sex worker, 25, İzmir**

Trans woman sex workers and non-trans woman sex workers interviewed were asked whether or not they had any knowledge of mechanisms such as shelters available to them in case of violence. 2 trans woman sex workers interviewed and living in Istanbul mentioned the Trans Shelter, founded and operated under the leadership of İstanbul LG-BTI Solidarity Association. The other sex workers stated that they were not aware of the presence of any shelter or guesthouse. 8 Syrian sex workers interviewed said they were very surprised to hear the state provided facilities like shelters, and that they had never heard such a thing before.

“There is a guesthouse here in Dolapdere (a popular neighborhood close to Taksim). If I needed, I would apply there. I did not know there was a place other than that. Would the State really provide people like us (trans people) with a facility to protect us from violence? I guess this would not happen in Turkey.”

**Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul**

Syrian sex workers interviewed have limited access to the legal information they need in connection with their doing sex work or being under temporary protection. With little or no knowledge of sex work legislation or refugee law in Turkey, Syrian sex workers have very limited access to justice due to the lack of preventive and protective mechanisms that provide services in accordance with their sensibilities after any violation of rights or because of negative prejudices about existing mechanisms.

A significant part of the services offered to improve the general situation of Syrian sex workers, including particularly health and human rights, is provided by non-governmen-
tal organizations working in this field. When asked whether they have received services from any non-governmental organizations to date, many Syrian sex workers interviewed seemed to have no knowledge about these non-governmental organizations. There are many Syrian sex workers who have not applied to these non-governmental organizations except for certain procedures relating to issuance of temporary ID card and some basic needs.

Of the 26 Syrian sex workers interviewed, 17 said they did not have detailed information on any NGO. The remaining Syrian sex workers, on the other hand, stated that they contacted some NGOs several times after being informed by their intermediaries, spouses, peers or other Syrians in their neighbourhoods. The Syrian sex workers who reported having applied to any NGO stated that they absolutely kept their work as a secret and did not apply to these organizations frequently. While particularly trans woman and man sex workers know about services of non-governmental organizations, as a result of increased visibility of initiatives by LGBTI associations, non-trans woman sex workers have extremely limited knowledge on this issue.

“Never heard of it. I don’t have a registration anyway. I have no ID. I can’t go anywhere. Would not they file a complaint about me if I went to such a place?”

**Man sex worker, 22, Bursa**

“I have not heard about such an organization. I do not know if there’s one in Adana. If I need something, I would tell the person I work with, he would see to it. What are they doing in these associations? They do not inform us of such things. I do not know at all what they do.”

**Non-trans woman sex worker, 21, Adana**
C. KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS LEVEL OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES ABOUT SYRIAN SEX WORKERS’ NEEDS

Face to face interviews were conducted with 47 representatives of public institutions and agencies as part of this study. During these interviews, public institutions and agencies were asked questions about their responsibilities and services as well as problems and needs of Syrian sex workers. Public institutions and agencies were asked many questions about the general situation of the Syrian population in their province, access of Syrian sex workers to health information and services, their access to justice mechanisms, the type of services they need, and whether or not they worked on these issues.

Discussions with public institutions and agencies have revealed that a significant part of the institutions interviewed have no policy on the issue in question and do not have detailed knowledge of what services Syrian sex workers need. Public institutions and agencies pursue existing policies based on public order, public morality and general health as far as Syrian sex workers are concerned and are not taking any steps on needs-based policies and practices in response to the problems of Syrian sex workers. An important reason for this approach is that public institutions and agencies do not know about the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers.

It was observed that public institutions and agencies interviewed did not have detailed knowledge about the problems expressed by Syrian sex workers regarding their access to health services. Underlining that all Syrians in Turkey, who are under temporary protection, can benefit equally from services, officials from public institutions and agencies have confirmed that there was no policy about invisible obstacles arising from socioeconomic conditions.

We filed a petition for information with the Ministry of Health about the efforts made to improve the sexual and reproductive health conditions of the Syrians who are under temporary protection in Turkey, in response to which we got the following answer from the Turkish Public Health Agency, Migrants’ Health Department:

“In accordance with the Directives no 2875 dated 25.03.2015, on “Principles Regarding the Health Services to be provided for Those Placed under Temporary Protection”, Women’s and Reproductive Health Department provides services relating to women’s and reproductive health for women of childbearing age in Turkey equally for also Syrian women under temporary protection too. We provide follow-up for women aged 15-49, pregnancy follow-up, puerperium follow-up, free iron and vitamin D support for the pregnant and puerperant. Counselling on contraceptive methods is given to women asking for it, as well as free pill, condom, monthly injectable preparation distributed to women who request it, and where IUD is requested, the person is referred to an appropriate health-care institution. Training is delivered about Safe Motherhood, Family Planning, Sexual Health, Nutrition in Pregnancy and STIs. 3,000,000 copies of
brochures on Prenatal Care, Postnatal Care, Neonatal Care, Pregnancy Nutrition and STIs prepared by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in cooperation with our Ministry and translated into Arabic have been published and distributed to public health directorates of the 10 provinces in the region (by size of population). Samples of Arabic brochures to be distributed in 2017 have been prepared and work is underway for publication.

In order to prevent discrimination and stigmatization of individuals in our country, it is essential that patients’ safety and personal rights be protected during notification of HIV infection cases. For this reason, the information about the identity of people applying to hospitals to be treated and tested for HIV / AIDS or of those who have recently been diagnosed with HIV / AIDS is reported by being coded. All of the actions carried out to control HIV / AIDS in our country take place all over the country and in a way to include all individuals. All individuals benefit from diagnosis and treatment services if they apply.41

The response from the Ministry of Health suggests that the ministry is working with relevant stakeholders to improve Syrians’ sexual health and reproductive health situation. However, there is no explanation about the sexual health and reproductive health situation of Syrian sex workers. This is due to the fact that the problems of Syrian sex workers are not visible and therefore are not known by relevant public institutions.

“All Syrians can apply to our family health centres or migrant health centres as long as they have temporary ID cards. Unlike the early periods of Syrians’ arrival to Turkey, many Syrians can now have access to these centres smoothly. Our Ministry is also trying to meet many requirements. The group you mentioned can easily access these services. Of course, it can be said that they are likely to be exposed to discrimination because of the work they do. But I do not think our health care staff would discriminate anyone in this way. They may be exposed to discrimination and exclusion by their community, relatives, at the very most. There is not much that can be done about it for the time being. “

Office of Provincial Public Health Directorate

“There are many Syrian sex workers in this neighbourhood. They can come to this centre and receive services as long as they are registered. I know there are some who do, too. Of course, we do not ask for what work they do, but if there are risky health conditions, we necessarily ask questions about the profession. Because there may be risks about the work they do and we may need to take steps to prevent it. Here we can tell that condoms should be used or what they should pay attention to in terms of reproductive health. This centre is a centre designed for Syrians and it is very good to have such facilities. But of course, people who do this work may not want to be visible because the neighbourhood is conservative. I guess they prefer going to private health-care centres.

41 This is the answer given by the Ministry of Health of Turkey on 13.12.2016 to our application for information.
I have a patient, for example, and there are rumours about her in the neighbourhood. In small neighbourhoods, everyone knows who does what. I had once told her to use a condom, not mentioning directly what work she was doing. Because if you talk to people from that group like that, they can even file a complaint about you. But I know she does that work. She’s doing that work with her husband. I think she was uneasy, the last time she came was last month. She never came back.”

**Migrant Health Centre Physician**

When it comes to the access of Syrian sex workers to health information and services, the common approach among public institutions and agencies is based on steps that can be taken towards the protection of the society against sexually transmitted infections. The policy is geared more towards protection of the society against infections allegedly “born” by Syrian sex workers rather than improvement of the sexual health condition of Syrian sex workers.

“We are constantly doing anti-prostitution raids with our police. There are too many Syrians doing this here along intercity roads. This means danger, because they spread diseases. I know that most of them do not use condoms. They spread diseases to the people who go to them, then they spread diseases to their family. For that reason, we always take the persons arrested to the venereal diseases dispensary.”

**Officer of Provincial Public Health Directorate**

Member of Anti-Prostitution Committee

When asked whether there was any work going on - other than raids by law enforcement - for the diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections among Syrian sex workers and whether these people had access to various services including counselling, an official of the public health directorate said that there was no work on this issue.

“Actually, we cannot even reach local persons working in prostitution. We do not have any special work going on. We know and follow too many prostitution cases within the province borders, there are many women who do this work. And then Syrians came on top of that. There is no special information campaign towards locals nor towards Syrians. Actually, it would be good if there was one. I think it is very important for the protection of public health.”

**Officer of Provincial Public Health Directorate**

When asked what barriers Syrian sex workers faced when accessing health information and services, an official said:

“There are too many problems. Our ministry is trying to develop effective policies to the best of its ability on this issue. Conditions at early stages of Syrians’ entry into Turkey are not the same as conditions present nowadays. Necessary information activities are being carried out regularly at camps, for example. In particular, reproductive health training is provided for women. Outside of the camps, we have set up migration health centres and our works are underway to open more. We can say that progress has been made on many issues like that.
On the other hand, the group you’re talking about is a difficult one. As much as I know, there has been no action specifically about the problems of this group. It is also difficult to do, because it is extremely difficult to identify this group. Even if we do, you cannot even talk about it because of factors such as the cultural and social conservatism among a significant part of the Syrians. In an environment where this is not discussed, it is extremely difficult to develop a policy on health problems that these people are likely to be exposed to in connection with their work. In addition, in fact, nobody wants to say that this work is being practiced among Syrians. In particular, public administration seems to be uncommitted on this issue. It would not be reasonable to expect an action to be taken when there is no will.”

**Officer of Provincial Public Health Directorate**

Unfortunately, public institutions and agencies have a low level of knowledge about protection and support mechanisms needed by Syrian sex workers after being exposed to violations of rights. Officials of many public institutions and agencies we have met stated that particularly Syrian women and girls become victims of gender-based violence. A significant number of Syrian women who are not sex workers are exposed to domestic violence or to violence by various actors in different settings during their daily life. It would be extremely difficult to say that even public institutions and agencies which can be claimed to be more sensitive on this issue have any awareness when it comes to discrimination and violence against Syrian sex workers.

Officials of many public institutions and authorities we have met stated that either very few or no Syrian women who are victims of violence apply to them. They said there was none among these women known to be sex workers by them. In other words, officials of many public institutions and agencies have reported having no data on Syrian sex workers who are victims of violence.

“As far as I know, there is no Syrian women referred to us doing this work. We hear a lot from newspapers that there are many Syrians driven into this sector. But no victim has been referred to us to date by the police. As no application is made to us, we cannot obtain any information about their problems.”

**Director of Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centre**

“When we receive intelligence about Syrians in prostitution, we certainly undertake raids. There are too many criminal organizations in this business. These women are being victimized. Some are subjected to violence, some to extortion. When necessary, we start proceedings.”

**Official of the Provincial Police Directorate**

“Frankly, we focus on Turkish nationals applying to us for placement to guesthouses/shelters. The ministry needs to find a solution to this issue; because even when we serve our own citizens, we have difficulties. Our guesthouses/shelters have a certain capacity. And if we were to place Syrians in these guesthouses hosting our own citizens, there may be some unrest. So, whether or not in the sector, we are not engaged in any prevention for Syrian women. Sure,
if the person is in the sector and Syrian, it becomes even more complicated. Because placing a woman from the sector to a shelter may bring about other difficulties. We also have reservations about placing a woman of Turkish nationality who is in the sector.”

Official of the Family and Social Policies Directorate

We have been informed by police officers at provincial police directorates that they receive a lot of intelligence as to Syrians doing sex workers and they take necessary actions about persons in question as a result of the tips received. However, we could obtain no clear information on what kind of preventive or supportive measures are taken in relation to particularly Syrian sex workers victims of violence.

“If a woman in this sector has suffered violence, we start legal proceedings. The system applied to the nationals of our country is applied to them equally. We do not have any special practice.”

Official of the Provincial Police Directorate

Given that many Syrian sex workers report serious difficulties in post-violence justice mechanisms and that sex workers of Turkish nationality who are victims of violence also face difficulties in access to justice, it would be hard to say that Syrian sex workers are adequately protected or supported after incidents of violence. The ambiguities in the answers given by officials of provincial police directorate in response to our questions about measures taken to protect Syrian sex workers who become victims of violence lead to a negative perception on the issue.

We observed during our contacts with provincial directorates of migration management that the authorities concerned did not have any knowledge about Syrian sex workers or did not want to give detailed information about the issue. Almost all of the officials in the provincial directorates of migration management we met stated that they acted in accordance with the relevant legislation.

“When we receive records about prostitution, we contact the relevant institutions in the province, especially the police. These are proceedings we have to follow as per the legislation. Of course the national legislation also has aspects related to public health and public order. That is to say, there are some things to consider due to the fact that they are both under temporary protection and do that work. We enter records about cases referred by the law enforcement agencies and try to take measures.”

Official of the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management

The approach that emerges from our contacts with the officials at provincial directorates of migration management suggests that Syrians doing sex work would be subject to the proceedings prescribed by national legislation. In other words, in a very similar manner to the approach of other public institutions and agencies, actions are taken on the basis of measures prescribed by the legislation on public order, public morality and public health. There is no approach addressing the services that Syrian sex workers would need in relation to their being in the sex work industry.
A deputy governor we met said that comprehensive services for Syrians started to be introduced in a more inclusive and effective way; but he also stressed that there are no particular efforts on Syrian sex workers.

“We hold in high esteem our Syrian guests. They are our guests to us and in our culture, guests are held in high esteem. Our governorate also makes all necessary efforts by mobilizing all its resources. As for the people you mention, we do not have any work underway about them. Actually, our police forces are taking some actions, but I do not think it is very effective in solving this problem. Actually, we do not know these people, though; that is, some of them may be doing that work with great difficulties or have many needs to meet. I guess, our provincial directorates, acting under governorate, provide a support when needed, but we have never had a special action for these people. Unfortunately, we do not have answers to the questions what their problems are, what they want, how we can save them.”

Deputy Governor

A district governor interviewed during the study stated that there is a very large Syrian population within the district boundaries he managed and he was from time to time informed in detail about the actions taken by the police. When asked what actions they take when there are Syrian sex workers with various needs, the district governor answered as follows:

“There are too many Syrians within the borders of our district. The Syrian population being so large, I occasionally receive information from our police organization about prostitution cases. We have information that these women work in a lot of bars and clubs around here. There are raids undertaken to such places and necessary actions are being taken. These women have not conveyed us any demand. I have not heard any, my friends would surely tell me if they did. They have not shared with me any such information, suggesting there has been no demand. Our relevant units would have certainly provided aid if they had made any request. Our governorate, municipalities and many non-governmental organizations provide a lot of assistance, they could certainly benefit from them.”

District Governor

A staff member of the social assistance and solidarity foundation we met said that no sex worker had ever applied to them and they did not have information about their needs. When asked whether they would support Syrian sex workers if they received an application from them, we got the following answer:

“There has been no application made to us. If any had, our board of trustees would have considered it. I think a positive decision would be taken, if the person is really in need. But of course it is necessary to examine it thoroughly. It is also necessary to consider whether or not any social assistance provided to a person doing that work would really go to that person. It’s a tough issue, and it’s very difficult to think about it unless we have an application.”

Official of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation
Provision of potential support services for Syrian sex workers takes place depending on the perspectives of line ministries and practitioners in provinces on this issue. It is a fact that many public institutions and agencies are concerned about the increasing visibility of sex work, which is common among Syrians. An official of the Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Policies offers the following line of thinking on the subject:

“Our institutions should not be afraid of developing policies on this issue. But they are afraid, because when the matter is reported by the media, it may be done so by way of criticizing our government. This being the case, policies cannot be developed to create services, and ministries are abstaining from it. We, local practitioners, cannot take any step unless we receive instructions from our ministry. If we did, it would cause a problem. As a result, services are not available at this stage. Services for the general Syrian population are ongoing, but we do not have any special action addressing the needs of the group you are talking about. “

Official of the Family and Social Policies Provincial Directorate

Provincial and district municipalities stand out as very important actors among public institutions and agencies in terms of the size of the services they provide to Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey. Many provincial and district municipalities provide important services for Syrians to have access to many services such as housing, fuel, food, clothing, financial assistance, health services and so on.

The officials of various provincial or district municipalities we have met reported providing significant services for the general Syrian population in provinces or districts under their administration and are trying to improve existing services. However, the same municipalities stated that they did not have any idea about Syrian sex workers and did not know what services they can offer for this group.

“As part of the activities of our municipality, we offer a wide range of support from health-care services to social assistance for Syrians living in host communities as well as support for camps within the borders of our province. Our units, working in great harmony with our governorate, are working hard to fill the gaps. However, people in the prostitution sector is a different case. We do not know much about how this group lives, where they work, etc. At the most, we are being informed when our police works on it. There has been no application they have made to us. At least I do not know any personally.”

Official of the Metropolitan Municipality

“I think it is necessary to take actions about the needs of these women. But we have to persuade our mayor to take such an action. I do not know how to persuade him. Everyone is afraid because it is a sensitive issue. We need to explain it to the public or we need to work on that without telling it to the media. But any way you slice it, it’s a hard work. I think the institutions will not work on these people’s problems for a long time to come. So it seems we will not get to know what their problems are and what we can do for them. “

Official of the District Municipality
Bar associations in provinces have an extremely important role to play about the access of Syrian sex workers to services given that they provide services relating to access to justice and thus perform a public service. Lawyers from women’s rights, refugee rights, children’s rights or human rights boards, committees or centres of the bar associations we met have more knowledge on the issue as compared to other public institutions and agencies. Units of bar association, which have to date provided legal aid to many Syrian women who are victims of violence as well as to many Syrian children who are victims of sexual abuse have knowledge - not enough though - about sex work among Syrians. It is known that bar associations, particularly women’s rights and children’s rights committees, have been following cases intersecting with sex work.

“Our women’s rights centre is following a file of a woman subjected to violence by her husband and sold to other people. This, of course, is not a sector in which one enters of his/her own consent, and therefore should be considered as a crime rather than a sex work. But it gives us a lot of ideas about the acts to which women in the sector might be exposed to. We see that Syrian women are likely to suffer from heavy violence by Syrian men. In fact, this is an issue in Turkey but serious obstacles faced by Syrian women discourage them from seeking their rights. Obstacles like language barrier, conservative family values, etc. If driven to the prostitution sector, they are twice less likely to seek their rights because in such cases there is a bigger pressure on them. Women cannot speak out under normal circumstances, and if they are in a sector frowned upon by their own community, they are less likely to speak out.”

Official of Bar Association’s Women’s Rights Centre

“There are too many applications coming from Syrian women to the legal aid unit. Many women become victims of violence and they cannot afford to seek justice. They need to arrange a proxy, pay the retainer, follow the case etc. When it is already very difficult for a Syrian woman to decide to do all these, it is still all the more difficult to find that money. Some Syrian women, especially those who are subjected to domestic violence, can apply to legal aid offices if they can take their children with them and receive the support of their families. For example, we had a case of a woman with 3 children, and in that case, the woman’s husband acted as her intermediary. She had been subjected to violence from him for a couple of times. When the level of violence she suffered increased, she had no choice but to let her family know, and her family protected the woman. This is also interesting because in most cases families of these women do not protect them. Women suffer a secondary victimization from them on grounds of honour. But in that case, they supported the woman and one day she came to our office with her elder brother. We continue to provide support.”

Legal Aid Bureau Officer
D. KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON REFUGEES ABOUT THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF SYRIAN SEX WORKERS

During the study, we have met many non-governmental organizations working on refugees. The aim of the meetings with NGOs which provide services in this field or undertake advocacy for increasing the quantity and quality of services was to determine their level of knowledge about Syrian sex workers.

There are many non-governmental organizations that work on refugees and migration, provide a wide range of services or undertake advocacy in that particular field. While some of these NGOs carry out comprehensive actions on asylum seekers and refugees, some focus on different thematic areas. Some non-governmental organizations, which provided services for specific population groups or advocated for improving the general situation of these people, have started to work on refugee rights since the influx of Syrians to Turkey in 2011. Therefore, the number of non-governmental organizations working in the field of refugees and migration has increased rapidly over the last 6 years.

NGOs interviewed during the study can be classified as below, by the thematic categories and their target groups:

a. Non-governmental organizations working on rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Turkey, equipped with financial and human capacity to operate in many regions of Turkey.

b. Non-governmental organizations established by Syrians who have come to Turkey, operating more at the local level, with lower financial and human capacity as compared to others,

c. Non-governmental organizations operating in specific thematic areas (women’s rights, children’s rights, LGBTI rights, etc.) and serving Syrians in such thematic areas or carrying out advocacy in that field for the last couple of years.

Non-governmental organizations capable of reaching larger groups of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, equipped with centres with all-purpose service provision across many provinces in Turkey, with high financial and human capacity have not taken any specific action for Syrian sex workers to date. These associations, which do not have any program addressing the services needed by the Syrians in this group, have recently started, particularly under the influence of non-governmental organizations working on thematic areas, to take specific actions on LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and Syrians under temporary protection. In addition, even though no specific action has been taken addressing the needs of Syrian sex workers, it is also true that Syrian sex workers have been receiving services from these NGOs in various fields. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that these NGOs have much knowledge about the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers in the field.
“Recently, we have been attending to many LGBTI individuals referred to us through LGBTI associations, particularly by those in Istanbul. Among these people, trans women in particular are doing sex work. Urgent needs of these people include housing and particularly social-financial assistance. Despite occasional difficulties, we are following up these cases to the best of our capacity. For example, if there is an urgent need in terms of housing, we can refer them to the Trans Guest House. Of course there is a limited physical capacity there, but for the time being, there is nothing else we can do. Maybe we can pay for a hotel for a short time. But these are all temporary solutions. If a person is trans and sex worker, things can become very complicated.”

Staff member of Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants

In parts of metropolitan cities with a stronger cosmopolitan social fabric, there is more visibility of LGBTIs and sex workers. This visibility also leads to the emergence of social solidarity networks more easily and to better expression of needs. However, in areas with a larger Syrian population and a more conservative structure, LGBTIs and sex workers are almost invisible. Such invisibility prevents Syrian sex workers from accessing non-governmental organizations, or even if they have access, renders invisible problem areas and service needs arising from the work they do.

“Our support office is located in a more conservative part of Istanbul. As far as I know, no person known to be a sex workers to us has ever applied. Though, I guess there should be many among those who have already applied who have not told it. Syrian sex workers, afraid of being uncovered, would not easily come out it in these centres where there are other Syrians. Therefore, social factors that prevent these people from accessing the services provided by non-governmental organizations are extremely important. Because of all these factors, we cannot say that we have detailed knowledge of the problems of Syrian sex workers.”

Human Resource Development Foundation

There are many non-governmental organizations established by Syrians fled the crisis in Syria and took refuge in Turkey. These non-governmental organizations, established particularly in neighbourhoods of metropolitan cities where Syrians are more crowded and concentrated, and serving more as a means of social solidarity, have a better command of the situation than other non-governmental organizations because they are in the field. One may think, under normal circumstances, that such non-governmental organizations, established by Syrians coming together in areas known to have a conservative social structure, would not want to talk about Syrian sex workers or have no knowledge of the issue, but in most cases this turns out to be a wrong preconception.

“The neighbourhood where our association is located is inhabited almost exclusively by Syrians. The folks here are a closed community. There are many women who come to our association, we distribute toys, diapers, clothes, medicine for their children. And we have a doctor. Maybe it is not visible, but as you mentioned, I know many women. We are helping them. For example, there is
one whose husband died in Syria, she came here with her children. She has no money, she’s doing this work. Or they do this with their husband. Some of them are subjected to violence, and our association is trying both to calm things down and to protect the woman. It’s a tough job, but we’re making our best. Even in this neighbourhood, there’s a woman like that. She thinks there is no one who sees the neighbourhood from outside, but there is.”

**Association for Solidarity with Syrian Refugees**

Although above-mentioned non-governmental organizations do not have a direct program for Syrian LGBTIs or sex workers, it can be said that there is more and more cooperation on this issue and that actions with a more detailed design emerge through the influence of LGBTI non-governmental organizations. It should be noted that some positive developments on the issue have taken place, not during the field study, but at the time of drafting of this report. For example, Humanwire\(^\text{42}\), a collective humanitarian donor organization, has opened a shelter in Istanbul where LGBTI refugees can take shelter for a certain period of time. This shelter can receive people who are doing or used to do sex work as long as they are LGBTI individuals. In addition, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants employs a total of four protection officers, who will provide support for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, in Istanbul and Ankara offices. As part of this action to be jointly undertaken by ORAM International\(^\text{43}\), the files of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees engaged in sex work will be directly followed by LGBTI protection officers.

As a result of the advocacy works carried out by LGBTI NGOs active in the field, non-governmental organizations carrying out humanitarian aid programs and campaigns such as the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants, Human Resources Development Foundation, Amnesty International Turkey Office, Association for Solidarity with Refugees, Support to Life are providing various forms of support when there is a need for urgent assistance for LGBTIs or where advocacy is needed for problem areas. It can be said -without ignoring this fact- that the actions of these non-governmental organizations on LGBTI issues do not yet show that they are specialized in unique conditions, problems and needs of Syrian sex workers. There is a need for detailed studies/actions on this area.

Over the last few years, there has been more and more non-governmental organizations working in the field of women’s rights, LGBTI rights or sex workers’ rights and trying to meet the needs of Syrian women, LGBTI and sex workers. These actions, undertaken particularly with the financial support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Population Fund, are helping reach Syrian sex workers in the field and provide them with the services they need.

\(^{42}\) For further information on Humanwire: https://www.humanwire.org/, Access Date: 10.06.2017

\(^{43}\) For further information on ORAM International, please see: http://oramrefugee.org/, Access Date: 10.06.2017
“As of 2017, the Red Umbrella, in addition to the field study that is the subject matter of this report, is also carrying out field work in Istanbul and Mersin through outreach personnel to reach more Syrians. As part of this effort, Syrian sex workers are reached and informed about relevant services they need, especially on health-care, and referred to NGOs providing services. On the other hand, three separate information meetings will be held in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir to present this report. Many stakeholders will be invited to these meetings including public institutions and agencies, NGOs, academics etc.”

Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association

“KADAV, a women’s NGO, is conducting a field study about Syrian non-trans and trans woman sex workers in Istanbul. We do outreach and provide services too. We have various types of assistance such as psychosocial support, legal aid and housing aid.”

Foundation for Solidarity with Women

In addition to the actions undertaken by the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association and the Foundation for Solidarity with Women targeting directly Syrian sex workers, Kaos GL and Social Policies, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation Studies Association (SPOD), organizations which do not focus on sex workers but provide services for Syrian LGBTIs or undertake advocacy for them, also work in this field. Although the works of these non-governmental organizations do not focus on sex work, they are still important when it comes to LGBTIs engaged in sex work. Kaos GL is carrying out actions for all refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey, both Syrian and non-Syrian through the financial support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. SPOD, on the other hand, provides service directly targeting Syrian LGBTIs.

“SPOD is working to increase possibilities for socialization of Syrian LGBTIs, to bring together Turkish and Syrian LGBTIs, to help them in the cohesion process and to provide them with psychosocial support. We have not so far come across too many sex workers in the field; but if we do, we would like to provide services to them as well.”

Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association
“IS THERE SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS US?”: NEVER-ENDING PROBLEMS OF SYRIAN SEX WORKERS
A. STIGMATISATION AND DISCRIMINATION IN ACCESS TO SERVICES

Syrian sex workers are stigmatized due to the fact that they have come from Syria on one hand and they do sex work on the other hand. In addition to these two factors, Syrian sex workers are further stigmatized and pushed to the periphery of the society as a result of multiple dynamics including but not limited to sexual identity, HIV status, disability, poverty and loneliness. Stigmatization, that accompanies social and economic exclusion, gives rise to discriminatory practices and poses serious obstacles to the access of Syrian sex workers to services in particular.

Syrian sex workers are being discriminated against by Turkish nationals on one hand and excluded by other Syrians on the other hand. The presence of many Syrians in Turkey in sex work industry is not only a matter of rhetoric and actions reinforcing xenophobia, but also that of stigmatizing and marginalizing attitudes developed by other Syrians on the basis of “morality” and “honour”. While many Syrian sex workers are described as “immoral” and “dishonourable” by Syrians because of their sexual identities and their presence in the sex industry on one hand, this situation also makes Syrian sex workers a scapegoat as the primary cause of xenophobia towards Syrians.

A Syrian tradesman interviewed qualified Syrian sex workers “a disgrace to the Syrians” and claimed that xenophobia against the entire Syrian community increased because of them.

“We’ve led a war. Turkey thankfully opened the door to us. Turkey gave us bread and fed us. Thank God we are fine. But some Syrians came here and took up prostitution. They have taken up dishonourable acts. They have brought us disgrace. I do not even want to call them Syrians. They are the disgrace of Syria. While we make a living through hell and high water, they started to run after easy money.”

Syrian tradesman, Male, Adana

Like Syrians in Turkey, many Turkish nationals have also developed a hostile rhetoric against Syrian sex workers. Many people we interviewed claimed that sex work was very common among Syrians and they brought diseases to the country. The prevalence of such rhetoric is leading to increased negative prejudices and hatred towards Syrian sex workers. In addition to stigmatizing attitudes, hate rhetoric consolidates discrimination on one hand and breeds violence on the other hand.

“We run a hotel. Look at the hotels in this area, there are Syrian women doing prostitution in almost all of them. If there is no hotel, they frequent daily rental apartments. They pick up a client and come. Initially, many people wanted to come to our hotel for that purpose. We did not allow it. Ours is not a prostitution hotel. Other hotels allow it. By doing so, these people are spreading diseases. They have disrupted both the image of the city and its health.”

A Turkish Citizen Hotel Operator, İstanbul
A Syrian sex worker interviewed said that a police officer had told her and to some other Syrian sex workers arrested things to the effect that they spread diseases. The fact that Syrian sex workers, working informally, are targeted through such rhetoric, foments xenophobia on one hand and gives rise to a more visible anger and hatred towards Syrian sex workers on the other hand.

“Once, the police carried out an operation. They raided our houses. There were two houses where we worked. They took the bosses into custody and took us to take our statement. I remember very well, one of the policemen constantly called us ‘sick’ in Turkish. He said things like “You have contaminated our country.” We cannot reply to them, we are not citizens anyway. If we did, we would get into serious trouble. We fear they’ll send us back to Syria.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 37, Hatay

9 of the 14 Syrian trans woman sex workers interviewed reported discriminatory treatment and ill-treatment during their contact with law enforcement officials. Trans identity, regardless of whether Turkish or Syrian citizen, may mean more violations of rights and thus vulnerability in some cases.

“I do not want to see the police, I’m scared. I fear that we will be sent back and beaten because we are trans. When working on the street, a policeman called me from inside a police car, so I had to go near him will-nilly. He said something in Turkish and slapped me. Then he yelled at me and went away. I was scared and I could not go out on the street for a few days.”

Trans woman sex worker, 19, İstanbul

“I live with a Syrian gay boyfriend. He’s not working, but I’m getting clients. He’s helping me at home. One day we left house. It was night and we were out to get something from the market. A police car approached and checked our IDs. Not me, but my friend understands some Turkish. He asked what we were doing outside at night. As I did not speak, he said, ‘Don’t you have a tongue!’ he yelled. As my friend needed to translate for me, I was responding late. The other policeman asked, “What the hell are you, are you faggots?”. Both of them laughed. They have ridiculed us. “Do not walk around here again” they said and went away. That’s why we are not wandering around here at night too much. We’re afraid of the police.”

Trans woman sex worker, 28, İstanbul

Syrian trans woman sex workers reported they were sometimes exposed to discriminatory treatment during access to health-care services. Expressing that they could be subjected to discrimination on grounds of their sexual identity because they are trans, they state that the bad experiences they go through discourage them from going back to the same institutions. This situation is obviously limiting the access of Syrian sex workers to health-care services.

“Most people do not view us as human beings. As a matter of fact, many officers approach us like burdens on Turkey’s shoulders. I mean, they consider us
as the cause of all their problems. On top of that, they also hate us for being a trans. I can see their fury when they look at our face. Since we are sex workers, they think that we are comfortably doing this work here in Turkey. Both people in the street and state officers may think in that line. You can see it when you receive service.

We are two trans individuals living at the same house. We’re sex workers. There was pain in my flatmate’s stomach, so we went to a hospital. In Istanbul, we can go to hospitals in certain parts of the city, not everywhere though. The situation in small cities is definitely worse. Because we are trans, we are afraid to go. I do not remember how many hours we spent in the hospital we went to. The problem is that nobody really speaks Arabic. They refer us, but we get tired by the time we convey our message. My friend was ill and could not wait too much. Doctors were sulking when they saw us, and from their looks we realized they did not like us very much. One doctor talked very harshly and raised his voice when speaking. As if we were a burden on him. Everyone was staring at us in the corridors we entered. The doctor was not good. People were giggling or staring at us and making faces. Believe me, going to hospital increased my friend’s illness. God protect my health, so that I would not have to seek help at hospitals.”

Trans woman sex worker, 33, İstanbul

Some of the Syrian sex workers reported having faced discriminatory and humiliating attitudes by some officials when they applied to the provincial directorate of migration management for registration or other procedures. They reported that security officers at these institutions and some registration officers raised their voices to the applicants and that some were yelling.

“We waited at the door for many hours. Come rain or shine, we all waited for a long time, both the elderly and children. The security guards at the door treated us badly. They speak Turkish, we do not understand anything. They were yelling at us for not understanding. We went in, we tried to find out where to go. There were Arabic boards here and there, but not enough. We entered the wrong place a couple of times. We were scolded. They also treat us badly all the more so because they do not like our looks. Not only the officers, but also other Syrians frown upon us too. We felt bad. We had to go there, and we did. Besides, we looked more like a man, but we were still effeminate. How could trans individuals with woman’s looks without an ID and without registration walk into such places. It would be like torture when they went there.”

Trans woman sex worker, 26, İstanbul

Many Syrian sex workers have problems with housing. In particular, gay and trans woman Syrians are facing discrimination when renting a house. Due to the perception that they are necessarily sex workers due to their sexual identity, many gay and trans women cannot find a home or are overcharged to rent a house. Syrian non-trans woman sex workers stated that they had problems about renting a house on their own, because they are suspected of doing sex work.
“We live together, 3 - 4 trans persons. We live together to share the rent and pay less per person and to have more security. To protect each other. But we are having a lot of difficulty when looking for a house to rent. For example, if I wanted to rent a flat on my own, it would be very hard for me to find one. We were driven from pillar to post till we rent our current flat. They refuse to give us a rental flat. They say we are doing ‘immoral work’. They overcharge us if they give it. We have no choice but to accept it. We suffer a lot.”

Trans woman sex worker, 26, İstanbul

“They do not lease a house to single woman. Landlords do not understand why a Syrian woman is alone. They view them either as prostitutes or as being unable to pay the rent. I am 42 years old, I have no husband, I work alone. How am I going to find a rental house. I cannot say I do this job either. They already suspect me. If I had not pulled some strings, I could not have found the current house too. They do not make any fuss when they see the colour of the money and when an influential person steps in. There’s a pimp, he does not work with me, but there was a landlord he knew. That is that guy who leased me the house. Otherwise I could not have found a house for months.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 42, Mersin

Syrian sex workers strive to work invisibly in their neighbourhoods. Particularly those living and working outside metropolitan cities like İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Antalya are in danger of becoming a target because of the work they do. The potential visibility in relation to being sex workers may bring with it all kinds of discrimination and violence. A Syrian sex worker interviewed reported not being able to stay at the same rental house for long periods of time. The reason for this is that people in the neighbourhood find out that the house is used for sex work and inform law enforcement officials.

“Who knows, how many houses I have changed in this city ... It is not a big city like Istanbul but I had to move from one neighbourhood to another a few times. Neighbours suspect those who come to the house. No matter how prudent we are, it catches the eye after a time. At one point we could not even shop at the grocery store in the neighbourhood, the shopkeepers refused to sell things to us. After a short while we left that neighbourhood.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 39, Gaziantep

A trans woman sex worker interviewed said that she applied to a non-governmental organization working on refugees through referral of her friends. She requested financial assistance and had some difficulties during the process. Factors such as the physical structure of the service centres of non-governmental organizations working in the field, applicants being together and crowded, and a low level of sensitivity of the service personnel about their sexual identities may prevent some sex workers from accessing services.

“My friends who had been there before referred me to an association. I needed financial assistance, I had no place to stay. I could not make a living. I’m not seeing my family. Where can I find money? I was referred to a centre in the back
streets of Tarlabası. As soon as I arrived the centre, people started staring at me. They found me strange for being a trans woman. The centre was so crowded, people pressed each other to get in. People who found me strange started to make fun of me. I realized that if I waited at the application area any further, I might get into trouble. I went near the officer and explained him my situation. I waited for about an hour. I thought that they would be worried about what may happen to me because of my sexual identity if I waited, no one cared. Even the officer looked at me sideways and looked back the people who were with him and laughed. It’s a bad thing. The staff members I saw later were good people, but the things I faced when I first arrived were not good. Places like that are not for people like us. How can trans women come to places like that? Then I did not go there again.”

Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul

There may be negative prejudices and exclusion towards Syrian sex workers among sex workers of Turkish nationality. Many local sex workers claim that the number of their clients declined due to the arrival of Syrian sex workers, that Syrians worked for low prices and “pushed down the prices” and spread diseases because they are not protected against sexually transmitted infections. It should be noted that tensions between the two groups, related mostly to an economic background, have added to the xenophobia against Syrians.

“Things have changed here after Syrians arrived. I used to get at least 5 clients a day before, now I cannot. At the best, I get only 2 clients, sometimes no client at all. They have taken away our bread. To top it all, they have brought down prices. While I get at least 100 - 150 TL per client, they get a maximum of 50 - 70 TL. Clients who go to them say ‘Why would I give you so much money’ and they never comes back to us. They are not clean, nor are they protected. They are spreading diseases.”

Local sex worker, Gaziantep

“Turkish sex workers do not like us at all. They call the police and denounce us. Because of them, the police are always raiding our homes.”

Trans woman sex worker, 32, İzmir

The stigmatizing and discriminatory language does not come exclusively from outside the group of Syrian sex workers. Many Syrian trans sex workers interviewed said that Syrian non-trans woman sex workers humiliated them. Syrian trans woman sex workers, who are already discriminated against, ill-treated and subjected to violence because of their sexual identity, are additionally excluded by non-trans woman sex workers from their own community.

“I work on the street and there are other trans women on the street where I work. There are both Turks and Syrians. One day, I walked down the street a little bit to find a client. There were 3 women waiting and speaking Arabic. I understood they were Syrian. I did not want to approach them but one saw me and yelled at me, ‘you’re a faggot or what’. The others came too and started
yelling. They wanted me to leave the area. They do not like us. They do not see us as women. They are not used to us. As they rarely saw us in Syria, they find us strange and exclude us.”

Trans woman sex worker, 33, İstanbul

A discriminatory language and stigmatization against Syrian trans woman sex workers, similar to that coming from Syrian non-trans woman sex workers, was also voiced by a Syrian male sex worker interviewed.

“I find clients at Hornet. I communicate in English and Arabic. But I face difficulties. Because there is Arabic information in my profile, some Turks insult me because they understand I am Syrian. Things like ‘Why did you come to Turkey, to get your ass screwed?’ and other degrading expressions. Or those who do not trust me because I am Syrian. One day a gay Turk wrote to me, saying he wanted to see me. I accepted to meet, but then he did not get back. I wrote again, I asked if he wanted to meet me. He asked thousands of questions, “Are you living alone?”, “Can I trust you?”, “Are you clean?” Many questions like that ... I always face such things. There are a lot of people who think I carry a disease or would extort their money because I am Syrian. I think they do not like us.”

Man sex worker, 22, Bursa

It is observed that xenophobia and racism, common in many parts of Turkey and targeting Syrians, is also common among local sex workers on one hand and that there is a high level of discrimination based on sexual identity among Syrian sex workers on the other hand. This shows that Syrian sex workers suffer multiple discrimination on various grounds such as not only being sex workers, but also on grounds of their sexual identity and being “foreigners”. Stigmatization and discrimination are likely to target Syrian sex workers through cross-cutting realities.

Invisibility of Syrian sex workers also minimizes the visibility of the violations of rights they suffer. Many Syrian sex workers interviewed talked about violations of rights they are exposed to, though to a limited extent, but they worry that telling their stories may aggravate negative attitudes towards them. For this reason, while many Syrian sex workers interviewed mentioned violations of the rights they suffer during the interview, they also deemed it necessary to say that such violations of rights targeting them were not actually very intense. Although this seems to raise a matter of credibility about what was told, it actually shows the intensity and gravity of the violations of rights that Syrian sex workers are exposed to, and the fear of re-victimizing that may arise from mentioning these violations. The intensity of this anxiety leads to a lack of knowledge about the negative experiences of many Syrian sex workers. This additionally leads to the invisibility of discrimination stories of different forms.
B. VIOLENCE

Syrian sex workers live in a cycle of violence triggered by many social, economic and cultural dynamics. In other words, violence has become a daily practice of victimization for Syrian sex workers.

Many Syrian sex workers experience violence of various forms due to various reasons. Syrian sex workers are struggling to survive in the midst of violence because of the following factors:

a. Xenophobia and/or racism against Syrians
b. The anti-sex worker attitude and the level of conservatism in neighbourhoods they live in
c. Sex worker’s sexual identity
d. Potential presence of an intermediary
e. Income level of the sex worker
f. Age of the sex worker
g. Work place of the sex worker
h. Turkish language skills of the sex worker
i. Level of knowledge of the sex worker about basic rights and services
j. The nature of the attitudes of service providers towards Syrian sex workers
k. The nature of the attitudes of law enforcement officers towards Syrian sex workers
l. Whether or not Syrian sex workers can access to services provided by non-governmental organizations

In addition to the factors listed above, many other factors can also be added to this list as factors that cause violence. The multiplicity and complex nature of the factors that give rise to violence is a reality that must be primarily considered when fighting against violence targeting Syrian sex workers.

Syrian sex workers are a vulnerable social group driven to the periphery of the society by social, economic and cultural reasons. Syrian sex workers, exposed to stigmatization and discrimination, face particularly acts of violence motivated by hate. Syrian sex workers, who experience violence as a daily practice, face many perpetrators of violence. The positions of these actors within the daily lives or working systems of Syrian sex workers provide us with an insight into the intensity of the violence. For example, if this actor is an intermediary working with the Syrian sex worker, the continuity, intensity and diversity of violence may increase.
The stories of the Syrian sex workers interviewed are telling us that the perpetrator of violence may be intermediaries, clients, organized criminal groups/gangs, law enforcement officers and other sex workers. This diversity arises when the Syrian sex workers get into contact with the above mentioned factors.

An important part of the Syrian sex workers we interviewed are working with intermediaries whom they say arrange them a space, find clients and/or protect them against security risks. In some cases, intermediaries are a person working with the Syrian sex worker professionally, and in most cases a “boyfriend”, “spouse” or “relative” of the Syrian sex worker. Being in an emotional relationship together with the role of intermediation can also bring about a vicious circle of violence of different forms against Syrian sex workers. The fact that Syrian or Turkish men are “lovers”, “spouses” or “relatives” of Syrian non-trans woman or trans-woman sex workers blur the professional boundaries in the intermediary role and consolidate the continuity and intensity of the emotional violence as well as other forms of violence. In particular, under the influence of cultural codes, it is extremely difficult for many Syrian sex workers to speak out against a male “lover”, “spouse” or “relative” to challenge such violence or to claim their right in the face of violence. This results in violence being used by such intermediaries as a control mechanism in a vicious cycle against Syrian sex workers.

“We have a daily lower limit, earning below that daily lower limit means trouble. Because we are looking after a few kids. One day I was very tired, and I was also ill. I told my husband that I did not want to work because it was late at night. He told me to get a few more clients and then rest. When I told him again I was tired, he hit me a few times. I understand him too, but I was ill and tired. I could not work. He just wants a bread to be brought home, he wants us to have something to eat.”

**Non-trans woman sex worker, 40, İzmir**

“My husband loves me very much. He finds me clients and he’s always beside me. But sometimes he’s jealous. I stay with clients, he is making trouble when I spend a relatively longer time with clients. He starts to yell. He slapped me a couple of times, he beat me up.”

**Non-trans woman sex worker, 39, İstanbul**

“Once, I had fallen in love with the son of the owner of the café where I found clients. Actually, he’s still on my mind. It seemed hard to work when I was with him. There were times when I did not want to work. I am young, I want to enjoy love. But it was not the thing to do, and after all, I was working there to give a share of my earnings to that café. It was not a problem in the beginning, we were spending time together and having fun. But then they started to ask why I did not work. I was beaten by him while I was in love. On top of it, the boss also beat me. Now they are not doing anything, because I work. There is no love anymore, but he stays with me when he wants. I cannot say anything. Life is very difficult indeed. It’s harder for us.”

**Non-trans woman sex worker, 29, İstanbul**
Sex workers who reported being subjected to violence from their intermediary refused to provide information about the violence by the intermediary during the initial interview. The first contact with sex workers from this group took place either in the presence of or through their intermediaries. Therefore, it was not possible for them to talk about violence from their intermediary. Once the intermediaries developed trust towards the study team, another interview could be conducted with the sex workers in this group. The stories of violence mentioned above were told during these interviews.

When talking about the violence they were subjected to from their intermediary, the sex workers did not want their name and the name of the places where they worked to be revealed. Such apprehension of the sex workers who talked about violence from intermediaries is caused by their fear that their intermediaries may use violence on them if they found out what they told or that they would not be able to work with these intermediaries again and make money. As can be seen, it is extremely difficult to make visible Syrian sex workers’ experiences of violence from their intermediaries.

Trans woman sex workers may also become subjected to violence from intermediaries like non-trans woman sex workers. Many Syrian trans women who were exposed to violence by their family because of their sexual identity left the cities they lived in, moved to bigger cities, got in contact with other trans women who do sex work and started to do sex work. Trans women, excluded and subjected to violence not only by their families, but also by their peers and their own community because of their sexual identity, try to survive by working in the sex industry. Some trans women who live with other Syrian trans women and do sex work when possible may in some cases do sex work together with trans woman sex workers of Turkish nationality. Working with a local trans woman sex worker with a higher income and better opportunities can provide partial benefits, especially for young Syrian trans women in terms of getting to know the sector, completing their transitional period and holding on to life. However, there are some cases where trans woman sex workers of Turkish nationality may also use violence against Syrian trans woman sex workers working with them. There are clearly class-based patterns emerging when Syrian trans woman sex workers in Turkey get into contact with trans woman sex workers of Turkish nationality.

“I first came to Kilis with my family, then to Gaziantep. There are 5 other children in the family other than me. 3 brothers, 2 sisters. I have always been effeminate. Even my brothers and sisters would make fun of me. I could never get along with them. I looked like a man, but it was a woman’s soul inside. One day I went to an internet café, and I searched places frequented by gay people. I found some, went to a few parks. Then I started to use partner search sites. I met some people. It was not like Syria, I was more relaxed and freer, but this ease disturbed my family. In Syria, all the relatives are considered family members. It seems they have spoken ill of me to my father and my brothers. One evening when I came home in the evening, my two brothers and then my father beat me badly. They locked me up at home for 3 days. I ate, I drank water, I slept. I did not see the daylight. Then one day I could get out of the house. I went out to the
coach station as soon as I got out. I went there but could not buy a ticket because I did not have any money. I could not go back home either. I wandered in the coach station almost one whole day. A coach attendant must have noticed me, he called me to his side. I was lucky, he spoke Arabic. At least he could tell something. He lived alone, I went to his home. I stayed with him one day. We slept a few times. He told me he would send me to Ankara. Next day, he actually booked a place for me at a coach to Ankara. I went there. I cannot tell you how the travel did me good. It meant freedom. I never saw my family again. They would kill me if they found me like that.

I’m now with a trans woman. I clean her house, I cook for her. I’m attending to all her works, I have also started to work. Now I dress like a woman. I was working with someone else before. She made a lot of money at my expense. We were going down on the street; she was driving the car, arranging clients, I was sleeping with the client arranged. She confiscated almost all of my money. She said things like “I’m already feeding you”. I did not challenge, but one day I could not put up any longer. “I do not want to give you all my money,” I said. She beat me. She had a boyfriend, she got him to beat me too. Then I left her house.”

Trans woman sex worker, 23, Ankara

Some Syrian sex workers, on the other hand, reported being subjected to violence from the owners of nightclubs, beer houses or bars they frequented to find clients.

“There is a bar we always go to, frequented also by many Turkish trans women. Yes, we have fun but our goal is to find a client. The owners of the place also know us. They would not let us in if they did not. It is sort of working for them. They have become our bosses. I am supposed to turn up whenever they call; I am supposed to respect them. One day I was beaten because I arrived late to the bar. I had to wear makeup for so many days to hide the bruises on my face. I could not go out to work either.”

Trans woman sex worker, 26, İstanbul

During the study, we have also listened to reports of violence sustained by many Syrian sex workers from their clients. In particular, there are stories suggesting that the contacts of trans woman sex workers with their clients are characterized by intensive violence. Among the Syrian sex workers interviewed, those working with intermediaries did not report any violence from clients. On the other hand, Syrian sex workers who do not work with intermediaries have told many stories of violence from clients. This suggests that Syrian sex workers working with intermediaries are better protected against violence from clients. However, the violence inflicted by intermediaries on Syrian sex workers, who are less likely to experience client violence, is significant.

“We cannot be protected because we work on the street. Sometimes we get more clients than Turkish girls because we are Syrian. The more clients we have, the more perpetrators of violence we encounter. Some clients think that we cannot speak out because we are Syrian. They use violence and extort our mon-
“We work with other girls. Clients come home. Sometimes girls wait in the drawing room, the one who gets the client goes into the room. One day a client came to me, there were two girls in the drawing room. I took the client to the room, got his money, gave it to the girls. I walked in, the guy asked for thousands of things. I took almost half an hour with him. Finally, I wanted him to leave. He refused to go, he wanted to get back his money. I said I would not, he clutched my throat. Girls noticed that something was going wrong and ran into the room. They chucked the guy out.”

Trans woman sex worker, 26, İstanbul

“One client called. He had come one more time before. A Syrian Arab. There was another person with him when he came home. He said he would come alone, but they turned up two people. I asked him why he did not tell it. He did not answer. I remained silent, I did not want any trouble. It was very difficult to rent a flat. But I got nervous. I had no choice but to sleep with both of them. The other wanted to have it once more. I objected, they pushed me in and had sex with me again. Then they just went away without giving money. After that I moved to another home. So that they would not know where I live.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 42, Mersin

“Once the police caught me, they took me to the police station. They constantly laughed until they took me to the station. One in the rear, two in the front, they jeered me. I understand very little Turkish, so I do not know what they said. Obviously they’ve made fun of me. When we came to the police station, a policeman grabbed my arm roughly, pulled me out from the police van. They kept me waiting at the police station for hours. Many cops called me ‘Faggot’. They constantly laughed.”

Man sex worker, 24, Ankara
A couple of weeks later, another police van attempted to capture me. I ran away. They got down the van in the middle of the road and followed me. I thought they’d kill me. They were two of them this time, of whom one was the same cop present in the previous incident. They swore at me. One of them grabbed my hair, kicked at my back. What did I do to be blamed? I am just struggling to earn my bread, nobody gives me a job so I do not do this work.”

Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul

“One day a policeman came home. I did not know he was a cop. Apparently someone told them I did this job. He came in civilian clothes, like a client. I took him to the bedroom, he started undressing. He pulled out a gun, put it on the side of the bed. I was scared. I showed with my hand and said I did not want a gun there. He did not say anything, he just laughed. He told me to approach, I did. He pushed me to the bed and had sex with me. He said he was a cop. He told me he would protect me and that my house would not be raided. I was so scared that I could not say anything. I already have a language problem, I cannot make myself understood with a little Turkish. He did not pay, and he left. He came once again later and did not pay like the first time. He treats me like his wife, but he does not come very often now. He just said he was a cop not to pay. My elder brother, who used to arrange me clients (her former intermediary) told me that we needed to move to another house. We did. I never saw him again. I encounter such men since my childhood. I cannot tell it to anyone. Even if I went to the police, what would I tell them? If they discover I’m doing this job, I can never do it again.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 21, Adana

The intensity of institutional violence further increases the invisibility of Syrian sex workers. Fear of law enforcement officers may be related not only to the violence experienced, but also to the fact that some Syrian sex workers are unregistered/informal or have applied to be resettled in a third country. All this violence and fear increase the invisibility of Syrian sex workers on one hand, and lead to increased violations of their rights and curb their search for justice on the other hand.

“I do not want to see cops. I am not registered, I do not have any document. I don’t know how they would treat me if I went there, with such looks. And if I get caught doing this work, they would send me back to Syria. There is a war in Syria. There is DAESH, they throw down people like us from top of buildings. They cut off heads. They rape. So I should not get caught by the police.”

Trans woman sex worker, 27, Gaziantep

“I will go to another country. I applied to the United Nations. I'm waiting. I have to do this work while I’m waiting because I have no money, I cannot make ends meet. You know, even when you said you were doing a study, I refused it repeatedly. I kept asking myself whether you were a journalist or a cop. They should not find out I’m doing this work, or else the police would tell it to the UN. Then I would have to stay here for a lifetime.”

Man sex worker, 27, İstanbul
One example of systematic and persistent violence against Syrian sex workers is the story of Werde, who was stabbed to death on December 17, 2016 in her home in Istanbul. Werde was a Syrian trans woman sex worker and was stabbed to death by someone who came to her house and said he was a client. Police officers checked CCTV records of the crime scene and the vicinity but could not identify the suspect. Her friends noted that Werde’s body was beyond recognition, pointing out to the motivation of hate in the murder. Unfortunately, to the list of victims of hate murders targeting trans woman sex workers of Turkish nationality, were now added Syrian trans women. Werde’s body was taken to the Forensic Medicine Institute after the incident and was buried in the cemetery of the nameless 3 months later.

Kıvlıçım Arat, a staff member of the Foundation for Solidarity with Women speaking to Kaos GL after the murder of Werde, pointed out how the hostility to migrants targeting Syrians gave rise to police violence and social violence:

“We interviewed about fifteen Syrian refugee trans woman sex workers. Werde was one of these women. All refugee trans women complain of two things: heavy police violence and social violence. Recently, a problem in the system prevents the issuance of documents to refugees. The system has collapsed. The primary demand of trans women is to have a legal status. That is why we had met Werde. We, KADAV staff, would provide legal advice.

Migrant trans women complain especially about motorcycle policemen they call ‘red police’. They report being exposed to too much violence. One of the women I interviewed had a crack in her head, the other’s eye had bruises... Refugee trans women are exposed to more violence than trans women of Turkish nationality. They are targeted by both hostility to migrants and transphobia. We can expect that violence will increase as long as they have no legal status. Trans women in a double state of vulnerability face a series of crimes going all the way to hate murders. They do not want to go to the police, rightly, because the police are also perpetrators of violence.”

Many negative examples have emerged about the scale of the violence suffered by Syrian LGBTIs who have taken refuge in Turkey. Many Syrian gay men, who are believed to be involved in sex work due to their sexual identity or whose vulnerability resulting from refugee status is exploited, also become victims of acts of violence motivated by hate like Syrian trans women.

Wissam Sankari, a Syrian gay man, is not only a victim of a homophobic hate murder, but also a testimony to the ordeal of many Syrian LGBTIs who have suffered severe victimization in Turkey. Wissam Sankari, whose corps was found in Istanbul’s Yenikapi district on July 25, 2016, fell victim to a terrible hate murder that appalled his own peers. Wissam Sankari was leading a very defenceless and vulnerable life under very poor condi-

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tions according to his friends. He was kidnapped by a group of men and repeatedly raped and beaten before being murdered. His friends reported that Sankari’s dead body was unrecognizable, his head was cut off and his internal organs removed.45

One of the perpetrators of violence targeting Syrian sex workers is organized criminal groups. Syrian sex workers, forced to work in criminalized areas and under extremely unsafe conditions, are also targeted by organized criminal groups trying to physically, sexually and economically exploit sex workers. Many Syrian sex workers who want to do sex work informally due to their legal status are intimidated by the threats and subsequent violence of various forms of organized criminal groups. Syrian sex workers who, in some cases, do not have valid identity documents and therefore legal status and security, who are unable to access to mechanisms for prevention of violence and post-violence protection mechanisms due to their sexual identity, are discriminated against because of their work, are in many cases tyrannized by organized criminal groups. Many sex workers, who have to earn an income from this industry because they do not have an opportunity to work in other sectors, find no alternative but to work under such domination. This situation leads to the continuity of the exploitation by organized criminal groups.

The intensity and continuity of violence imposed by organized criminal groups on Syrian sex workers is reinforced not only by the obstacles to the access of Syrian sex workers to justice mechanisms but also because of illegal relations established over time by organized criminal groups with some of the law enforcement agencies in particular. In other words, many organized criminal groups can operate comfortably thanks to some public officials covering up incidents to obtain benefits or illegally carrying out some other procedures. This situation causes the victimization of the Syrian sex workers to become persistent.

“Lately, some men have cropped up on the street, exacting tribute from us. Many girls objected and refused to give it for some time. A few days later they were attacked by cars passing by the street. They were intimidated. There are some who pay tribute daily or a few times in larger amounts. We are obliged to give 75 - 100 TL per day. That’s the only way you can work on that street. If you do not, they beat you very badly. They may kill you. They tell us to go to the police but it will be useless because some of the girls say they work with the police. When girls are attacked, there are never any cops on the street. Cops show up when the other guys (gangs) are not there. There’s collusion. The police are obviously getting a share of the money.”

Trans woman sex worker, 26, İstanbul

“There are men who shut their eyes to commercial exploitation of us during border crossings, in camps, on the street and everywhere. There are officers who get a benefit from it. Such things happen a lot in Kilis, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa.

It is not only Syrian or Turkish men who make money out of women. A woman who came from Aleppo like me had to have sex with a gendarmerie first. She had sex with smugglers. Then with camp officers. She’s not in the camp any longer. A group of people make the woman work. They tortured the woman in all ways imaginable. They do not give the woman a phone, lest she complains. Even if she called, nothing would happen, because those who make her work give a share of the money to others. There’s always someone with her when she goes out. There are other women like her. It seems her case is sometimes reported in news. You can’t put everyone in the same basket, of course, they opened the door to us, saved us from the war. But on the other hand, some are selling women.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 42, Mersin

In addition to psychological and sexual violence, Syrian sex workers also become victims of other forms of violence including particularly economic violence in all cases. It is likely all their earnings be confiscated or a significant share of their earnings be extorted by their intermediaries, landlords, law enforcement officers or organized criminal groups. Economic violence, along with informality and insecurity, drives Syrian sex workers to poverty.

“If I did not pay the owner of the club where I find clients, or if I wanted to give less money than they want, they would either fire me or denounce me to the police or they would get all my money. You cannot stand up to bosses. They would find a way to make you suffer. At least 1/3 of the money I get from each client goes to them. I have to make ends meet with the money left.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 29, İstanbul

“The landlord is raising the rent too much each year. He knows that if I get out of this house I will find it very difficult to find another. I have to give him the rent he wants. But nobody would pay 1250 TL for this house. I have to give it. If I refused to give it and leave, he would denounce me to the police. He would get others to raid my house.”

Trans woman sex worker, 30, Gaziantep
C. INTERSECTING REALITIES

Syrian sex workers’ experience of violence contain many different factors. The criminalization of the sex work and the vulnerabilities resulting from the fact that especially those from Syria are doing sex work lead to the emergence of many organized criminal groups in the sector. Many Syrians are victimized by migrant smugglers or human traffickers because of their desperation in the process of leaving their country. Difficulties in migration processes may continue after the Syrians have arrived in Turkey. Particularly, victims of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children remain exposed to the adverse effects of these two severe human rights violations throughout their lives.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children, distinguished from sex work in terms of dynamics targeting children and constituting a severe violation of human rights, is unfortunately victimizing many Syrian children. Commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, especially in the form of arranged marriage of Syrian girls with Turkish men bring with it many debates. Many young Syrian girls are married off to older men, a phenomenon justified by the “cultural structure” of Syrians in Turkey. A significant part of these marriages are characterized by the money given to the family of the Syrian girl in return for this marriage. In other words, some of the Syrian girls who have taken refuge in Turkey with their families are “married off” to persons older than them in exchange for money. The harm these marriages inflict on the physical and mental well-being of children is explained in the reports of many NGOs or media agents working on the subject.

This form of violence, inflicted on Syrian girls, has some characteristics causing them to take up sex work later on in their lives. A Syrian sex worker we interviewed told us that she was “married off” to a man much older than her by his family and that some events caused by the cycle of violence in this marriage drove her into this sector. It is thought-provoking that even the camps fall short of protecting some Syrian girls from this cycle of violence.

“We have come to Turkey with all the members of the family. They put us in one of the camps. At first it was nice, at least there was no war. Then, some Turks started to come to see the young girls of the families in the camp. As families had no money, they were selling their daughters for money. They told me a 56-year-old man saw me and liked me. He was a worthless piece of shit. My family sold me to him for a few thousand TL. He had another wife. She was older than me. I was just 16 years old. I’m now 21. He constantly beat me up, his brothers wanted to have sex with me. I raised my voice, I got beat up. Everybody, including the women in the family, beat me up. A guy in the neighborhood helped me to escape, gave me some money. I took a coach and came to a big city. Here, people I met suggested that I do this job, and I started to do it.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 21, Adana

The same Syrian sex worker stated that not only herself, but many Syrian girls, were being married off to men of Turkish nationality whom they did not know at all, in this way and even under harder conditions. The Syrian sex worker noted that in these marriages,
Syrians Under “Temporary Protection” in Turkey and Sex Work

Syrian girls were exploited in every way, they were raped, viewed as slaves and that some of these marriages, claimed to be done with only one person, actually allowed all the family members of the men who “got married” with the girl to exploit these girls in various forms.

“I am not the only person. My uncle’s daughter was also married off. She was married off before me. She was 15 years old when she was told she would be married off, she did not even know what marriage was. I did not know what it was, either. They said “we’ll send you to someone”. You have to go. At that age, you can’t refuse. Your family gets money, you become an object of barter. Your marriage means your family gets something to eat. At that time, that was how they explained it to convince us, so that we would cry less. I’m now cursing all of them. I’ve lost my family, and I’ve taken up this work. I’m 21 years old, I feel 50 years old.

My uncle’s daughter was married off before me; about a year ago. After the marriage, we could not see her but we got her news. They once told me she was ill-treated. I was very upset, but I could not do anything. In our culture, when a girl is married off, she stays with that guy for a lifetime. If something bad happens, it is the girl to be blamed. That was what happened. Almost all the members of the family of that worthless shit guy took advantage of her. My uncle and the others got angry with the girl, as if it were her fault. ‘She tarnished our honour,’ they said. They repudiated the girl. They did not get her back to the family to avoid rumours. You know what, that family sold the girl to another family. I’ve heard it later. I had been married off then. I don’t know what she’s doing now. They marry you off when you are a baby. They’re basically selling us. I want the State to protect us, but it is a bit futile after all what has happened to us. You see my situation. I am doing prostitution at my child age.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 21, Adana

A representative of the women’s right centre of a bar association said they came across too many cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children and there is need for a more effective struggle to resolve these cases.

“We face very bad cases. In fact, we are fighting for the solution of this issue, we bar association, as well as the directorate of family and social policies and police. We attended to many cases to date; one feels such a pang of sorrow. Little girls are sold for a song. They call it a cultural background, but in the civilized world this is called child sale, child abuse. There may be cultural differences, but we need to combat some cultural differences. What I mean is that if they are selling a child, this is something against which we need to fight fiercely. Men of Turkish nationality are marrying Syrian girls 30 to 40 years younger than them. This cannot be called a cultural difference. This is a crime. And we need to fight this crime.

We, the bar association, are doing our best. Both in terms of working with relevant authorities and effectively following the files. But it is not enough, because
we just protect victims. The real number of cases is much higher than those referred to us. What is the point in protection if it comes after things have happened? We need to scrutinize the underlying reasons of this issue and come up with ideas to protect children. I don’t think there are effective policies carried out right now.”

**Representative of Bar Association’s Women’s Rights Centre**

An officer of the provincial directorate of family and social policies we met said that there is a large Syrian population living in the province and they were aware of the intensity of cases such as child abuse or commercial sexual exploitation. The same officer stated that they provided training for Syrian women both at temporary accommodation centres and outside these centres.

“This is a multi-faceted issue and it is unfortunately not possible to get a quick result. There are cultural differences and it is extremely difficult to educate people, especially those above a certain age. Through the initiatives of our Ministry in cooperation with NGOs working in the field, we have delivered too many trainings for Syrian women and we continue to do so. We have trainings particularly on child abuse, women’s rights and similar issues. It is not enough, but we are making our best. Our Ministry is very sensitive and willing to act on this issue.”

**Official of the Family and Social Policies Provincial Directorate**

The Ministry of Family and Social Policies stated, in reply to our application for information, that the ministry organized various trainings in and outside the camps about violence against women, child abuse and child marriages.

“Combatting Gender-Based Violence and Humanitarian Response Program” developed in order to raise the awareness of Syrians who took refuge in Turkey about gender-based violence, to build the capacities of relevant service providers on response to gender-based violence and to provide technical support to Turkey on this issue was implemented in Nizip-1 camp in Gaziantep, selected as a pilot camp, from April 2013 to June 2015 through cooperation of our Directorate General, AFAD and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Meetings have been held with Syrian women in order to mobilize Syrians about gender-based violence and to raise their awareness in this regard, to share information about child marriages and forced marriages, to build solidarity among women and to develop emotional skills. At these meetings, women were provided with a suitable environment to express themselves and to show solidarity with each other, and they received information on early and forced marriages and violence against women. In addition, they have also been informed about legislation and application mechanisms, human trafficking, etc.

Brochures were prepared in Arabic and Turkish to inform Syrians on human trafficking, early and forced marriage, application mechanisms to be reached when one is exposed to violence or witnesses violence and these brochures were sent to provinces hosting camps or large numbers of Syrians.
No matter what their status and nationality, women of foreign nationality and accompanying children subjected to domestic violence and violence against women in Turkey can benefit from violence prevention and monitoring centres, women’s guesthouses/first admissions units if they apply.  

One of the most important functions when it comes to combating commercial sexual exploitation of children lies with police officers. The Ministry of the Interior develops policies in cooperation with all other public institutions and agencies on the issue and by coordinating its affiliated units. However, there are allegations that the attitudes of some law enforcement officers who work in provinces and who are supposed to take precautions in order to protect the victims cause some disruptions and problems in fighting with commercial sexual exploitation of children.

“We receive cases, either referred to us by the police organization or we try to follow the files in coordination with the police. But sometimes we encounter such things that we ask ourselves how we can fight these problems. In police stations, some police officers keep victimized children next to the perpetrator or they try to close the file by saying “Such is the custom among Syrians.” I don’t think they do so out of a malicious intent, but some police officers need to be trained on how to act. Particularly in the case of sexual abuse or forced marriages, protection measures must be taken, taking into account the child’s best interests, and the police officers should know what they do. The prosecutor, the bar association, the directorate of family and social policies, and even the provincial police follow up some cases in coordination, but sometimes a police officer comes and takes steps which causes the child to become a victim again. I know you wonder how they can act like that; but they do. This ruins the co-operation of all the institutions.”

Official of Bar Association’s Women’s Rights Centre

Many Syrian sex workers interviewed, non-governmental organizations working in the field of refugees and migration, representatives of bar associations and even the official of the provincial directorate stated that the real number of commercial sexual exploitation cases is more than it seems, but that there are dynamics that render these cases invisible. It is not only about “child marriages” or child abuse but there are also allegations about the exploitation of Syrian girls in the sex work sector. Given the gravity and seriousness of these allegations, we feel it necessary to reiterate our desire that many stakeholders working on the issue, especially public institutions and agencies, should get their hands on the issue and solve the problem urgently.

“There are Syrian girls working in many clubs and bars. They are not even yet 18. Many of them have become dependent on drugs. Most of them do not work alone, some men sell them. It’s easier to sell these girls because it’s easier to fool them. These guys make not one person, but a few girls work.

46 This is the response given by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies to the applicant for information no. 17839 dated 24.11.2016.
Almost all of these girls are on bad terms with their family. The father of some of them died in war, some were sexually abused, some were sold by their father, some others were sold to others by the man whom they were forced to marry.”

Trans woman sex worker, 33, Istanbul

Almost all of the different stakeholders interviewed during the study stated that Syrian girls were becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. However, the police directorate of many provinces contacted through applications for information stated that no application had been made to them and there were no case records in connection with this issue. This indicates that the cases of Syrian children, victims of commercial sexual exploitation are not reported or cannot be reported to police units. A police officer whom we contacted to discuss the issue mentioned the difficulty of identifying child exploitation cases in the sex work sector as follows:

“It is difficult for us to find those who sell these children; they are not the same as before. They change methods before we launch an operation. Whenever we change the method, they change it too. They have been doing this business for years and are now more professional.”

Official of the Provincial Police Directorate

In addition to the commercial sexual exploitation of Syrian children, it is a fact that many Syrians become victims of human trafficking in Turkey. According to the answer given by the Directorate General of Migration Management on 16 December 2016 in reply to our application for information, there are 151 human trafficking victims in Turkey. It can be argued that the number of cases reported to the Directorate General of Migration Management does not indicate the real number because of the difficulty of detecting human trafficking cases and the existence of socioeconomic conditions that make it difficult to reach cases.

“While fleeing Syria, many Syrians fell prey to migrant smugglers first and then to human traffickers. Many difficulties experienced in border crossings have increased the number of these cases. Many Syrians who were fleeing from war and trying to survive under economic difficulties were abused. Especially Syrian women and girls fell prey to human traffickers. The fact that human trafficking, by virtue of its nature, is mobile and traffickers constantly change methods in order not to be detected by law enforcement officers combating them means that the numbers reached are far from the real number. It is like that everywhere in the world and it is necessary to fight against this situation, to reach cases more effectively and to protect the victims.”

Human Resource Development Foundation

An official of the Directorate General of Police Organization we met stated that they had difficulty in combatting human traffickers.

47 This is the response given on 16.12.2016 by the General Directorate of Migration Management to the application for information no. 89249 dated 06.12.2016.
“In the past, it was easier to launch operations. Now we follow them and launch operations. A big operation was launched two days ago in Antalya. But human traffickers now use more methods than before. Now they know the arguments, even when caught, they are moving faster to destroy evidence or to suggest victims to give a certain declaration. Or they take precautions. For example, they used to confiscate passports or IDs in the past, but now they can keep hold of victims, even if they no longer confiscate them. These people are also equipped with many technical means. We follow them, they too. Their relationship networks can also be very complex. This may involve an average human trafficker and even a public officer. Our police organization is striving to lead as effective a fight as possible. But the complexity of the matter may be demanding for us.”

Official of the Police Directorate

A Syrian trans woman sex worker interviewed stated that many Syrian sex workers were being tyrannized by human traffickers and forced to work. The Syrian trans woman sex worker stated that not only non-trans woman sex workers but also some trans women may be victims of trafficking and that criminalization of sex work strengthened criminal organizations.

“It is not difficult to see these people; it is enough to go to a night club and look around. There are women working of their own consent, as well as those working without consent. I have passed many years in this setting and I know very well who is a pimp and who is a friend. Many women start work to make money. Then they are deceived by people they meet. The man becomes her lover first, and can make her do what he wants. However, this is a scenario and he intends to exploit the woman. After a while, this man introduces the woman into the place where other women work. If the woman challenges, they kill her. The man is already a human vendor. They make many Syrian women work like that. A lot of men start a relationship under the guise of a lover, then they confiscate IDs or threaten women with their children. It is not only normal women, but also trans women who fall prey to these men and who are sold. You can’t see them, they go unnoticed. They pass by you, but you don’t notice they are victims. Some of them remain silent in order not to get into trouble and some to avoid falling from the favour of their family and some in order not to be killed. Many other women also fall into this trap. No police, no gendarmerie. Either they are in contact with some of them or they really do not see what is going on.

Women are not only Syrian, but also they have no money, their husbands are dead, they have children or are subjected to violence or have been sold, and also do this work. They have a world of problems. Neither the society nor the state accepts what she does. So she’s afraid, and there’s no one to whom to complain if she gets into trouble. These men take advantage of this setting to exploit women. The woman thinks she cannot get help, no matter from whom she asks for help. Then, these guys make a fortune.”

Trans woman sex worker, 30, Gaziantep
Syrians Under “Temporary Protection” in Turkey and Sex Work

D. JUSTICE INACCESSIBLE

Many Syrian sex workers, who face discrimination and violence, do not have access to justice mechanisms. Many factors prevent Syrian sex workers from accessing justice mechanisms. This means that the members of this group are not protected against discrimination and violence, and therefore violations of rights target them in a vicious cycle.

There are various obstacles to the access of Syrian sex workers to justice mechanisms. The most obvious of these obstacles can be listed as follows:

a. Low level of knowledge among Syrian sex workers about justice mechanisms.

b. Language barrier faced by Syrian sex workers.

c. Stigmatizing and discriminatory attitudes displayed by officers in judicial units contacted by Syrian sex workers during their access to justice mechanisms.

d. Different forms of violence against Syrian sex workers particularly by law enforcement officials.

e. Distrust of Syrian sex workers towards law enforcement officers and officials in judicial units.

f. The fact that Syrian sex workers do not have the economic capacity they need in the process of access to justice.

g. Limited support of non-governmental organizations that Syrian sex workers may need for access to justice.

h. The presence of other actors, such as intermediaries, to which a part of Syrian sex workers are dependent, and the obstructive role of these actors in access to justice.

i. Criminalization of sex work and negative consequences of this situation on the legal status of the Syrians

Since Syrian sex workers are a vulnerable population group pushed to the periphery of the society, they have a low level of knowledge on how access to justice mechanisms. Syrian sex workers, who are invisible and who have little contact with protection and support mechanisms, have limited knowledge of what justice mechanisms are and whom to contact to be protected or how perpetrators can be punished. There is no special program implemented in order to raise the awareness of Syrian sex workers, who have limited contacts with public institutions and agencies, especially non-governmental organizations providing services in the field.

Syrian sex workers, who have limited information on the issue, also face obstacles in the process of access to justice due to the state policy on sex work and because they are not Turkish nationals. Syrian sex workers do not want anyone to know their situation in this sector. Syrian sex workers, who have to be invisible in order not to be uncovered, may re-
frain from appealing to any institution when they encounter any violation of rights. Many Syrian sex workers who have made applications for resettlement in a third country but have no choice but to engage in sex work for want of alternatives may not be applying to justice mechanisms because they fear that they will not be resettled in other countries if they become visible. At the same time, many Syrian sex workers may not have made temporary protection applications. Many Syrian sex workers who do not want to get into contact with law enforcement officers or judicial units find themselves in a constant cycle of violations of rights. In addition, many perpetrators may take advantage of the situation of the Syrians and victimize them more.

Syrian sex workers have limited access to lawyers in particular. Syrian sex workers, who have very limited information on how to access bar associations or little awareness of the services of the non-governmental organizations which work on refugees and migration and provide legal aid services, cannot access lawyers after violations they are subjected to. There may also be some problems in the appointment of legal aid lawyers in some provinces. Although Syrians under temporary protection can get a power of attorney issued through notary public, there are still some problems in notarial procedures in some provinces.

“Under normal conditions, Syrians need to go to the office of a notary public to get a power of attorney so that the lawyer can attend to the proceedings of that person as an attorney. But still in some notaries, thousands of documents are requested or they may be problems in the confirmation process. This can mean that applications are delayed. There should not be such problems, especially in post-violence protection mechanisms, so that victims can be effectively protected. As the lawyer cannot do anything, there may be problems about emergency interventions.”

Legal Aid Bureau Officer

There are many who do not have temporary protection status, especially among Syrian sex workers. Syrian sex workers who do not have relevant identity documents are hardly likely to access to justice after exposure to acts of violence.

“The client who came home beat me. He took away my mobile phone and my bag, then went away. I have no ID, where should I go now? When I’m in this situation, shall I take the trouble to get an ID card issued? The police do not like us anyway, what shall I tell them? Should I go to the hospital or to the police? Who can help me?”

Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul

Syrian sex workers, peers of most of whom have been ill-treated or subjected to violence during their contact with law enforcement officers, have extremely limited confidence in law enforcement officers. Many Syrian sex workers avoid dealing with law enforcement officials because of punitive measures taken to prevent their work. In addition, the visibility of the stories of violence by some law enforcement officers prevents Syrian sex workers, who are victims of violations of rights, from applying to police stations in particular.
“I do not want to go to the police. We get into many troubles. They tell us to go to the police. I would not go. Maybe the police would hit me or something else would happen to me. I know many girls were beaten by the police. Police officers treat badly to girls who work on the street, slap them, or tug at them. I even heard about police officers who threaten the girls and take away their money. I would not go to the police unless I’m dead.”

Trans woman sex worker, 26, İstanbul

The economic capacity of Syrian sex workers is low because their incomes are not regular and are low. There are many Syrian sex workers whose access to justice mechanisms are limited, since they need to pay the lawyer, or even if they need to attend to their own case alone, they need to pay money. A significant part of Syrian sex workers, who do not know that they can apply to and receive support from legal aid bureaus, certain civil society organizations working on refugees and migration and relevant units of bar associations are deprived of all legal counselling. As a result, either no application is made to justice mechanisms or, even if an application is made, perpetrators are not punished.

Many Syrian sex workers, especially those who work with intermediaries or those who are afraid of threats of perpetrators who violate their rights or their potential to re-victimize them, cannot have access to justice mechanisms. Syrian sex workers are a very vulnerable social group due to their socioeconomic and legal status. Many perpetrators can easily violate the rights of members of this group. Many perpetrators, who are almost convinced that members of this group will not engage in a struggle for justice against them, constantly exploit Syrian sex workers. That is why many Syrian sex workers who are raped, extorted and beaten cannot apply to police centres or police stations.

“There are many Syrian sex workers who are subjected to various kinds of violations of rights. We come across a lot of them during our interviews. For example, they get beaten by the police, but they cannot go to the police station because they are beaten. Or they do not trust the police or are afraid because they are threatened. Or they are afraid of a client who inflict violence on them. Because it’s a group vulnerable to attacks. They can file a criminal complaint, but there is nobody to protect them after they do so.”

Foundation for Solidarity with Women

“I cannot apply to the police station. My husband has used violence on me a few times. Sometimes I was very tired. There were some clients whom I did not want to receive, so I got beaten. Sometimes he confiscated my money. I remained silent because he’s my husband and head of the household. That’s how we earn our bread. I cannot hand him over to the police. Both because he’s my husband and I’m dependent on him. Without him, I cannot find clients as I do now. And wherever I go, he would find me. I can’t do anything.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 40, İzmir
“If I knew they would protect me, I would go to the police. But they cannot protect me, even if they want. They would say, ok your application is received, you now go back home. The boss knows where I live. She knows the girls I stay with. That put aside, I owe him money. There’s an IOU. How can I complain? If the state is going to protect me, okay. I would not apply, I am not that mad... “

Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul

“We were working on the street, a car approached and started to bother us. They began to swear, when we responded, they got down and started to manhandle us. When we saw the police car passing, we screamed, asking for help. The attackers escaped, and the cops said ‘get lost’. The police do not like us, they would not come to our rescue.”

Trans woman sex worker, 26, İstanbul
E. POVERTY

Syrian sex workers are the victims of social and economic exclusion. Syrian sex workers, who experience social exclusion leading to violations of rights due to a multiplicity of factors as well as economic exclusion leading to poverty, have thus been condemned to poverty in addition to discrimination and violence.

14 of the 26 Syrian sex workers interviewed stated that their monthly income ranged from 500 TL to 2000 TL. While the remaining 10 Syrian sex workers reported an earning between 2001 - 3000 TL, and only 2 Syrian sex workers more than 3000 TL monthly income.

There are many reasons driving Syrian sex workers into poverty. These causes condemn Syrian sex workers into a vicious cycle of precariousness and vulnerability while also preventing them from accessing services. Some of the causes in question are:

a. Economic violence of intermediaries
b. The fact that the sex work sector is criminalized and targeted by continuous preventive practices.
c. The fact that they have children and need to spend money to look after their children and other dependent family members.
d. Economic violence of landlords or real estate agents when renting a house.
e. Being overcharged at hairdressers and other businesses where they buy services.
f. Being constantly mobile because of the administrative practices they are exposed to and additional costs incurred by such mobility.
g. The presence of family members they need to look after - other than children
h. Additional expenses arising from sex work
i. Economic abuse of third persons (extortion, bribery, unfair administrative fines, etc.)
j. Additional expenditures arising from continuous exposure to acts of battery, extortion and similar acts

It would be wrong to think that monthly incomes reported by Syrian sex workers are net amounts which get into their pocket. This income should be assessed by taking into account the socio-economic conditions surrounding Syrian sex workers. Some of the sex workers interviewed work with intermediaries. Taking into account the dynamics of intermediary relations, it turns out that the money left for Syrian sex workers is not very high.

“I give all I earn to my husband. I can’t save any money. My husband buys supplies for the home. He sometimes gives me money to cover my needs. I go to a hairdresser or do other preparations for the work. But the rest of the money goes to my husband.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 39, İstanbul
“I leave a portion of the money to the club owner. Half of the 70-80 TL I get from the client goes to the club owner. The more clients I get, the more money is left to me. Likewise, that much money goes to the club owner. When I get 5 to 10 clients, I get enough money left for me. But in such cases, at most 400 TL is left to me but it is very rare. I meet my daily expenses with up to 200 - 250 TL. Cigarette, alcohol, expenses of the children, hairdresser ... You cannot work every day. Sometimes you get 100 TL, sometimes 200 TL, sometimes you cannot make any money. You make a maximum of 2000 - 2500 TL per month. In İstanbul this is hardly enough to get along.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 29, İstanbul

In addition to the economic violence of intermediaries, it is a fact that Syrian sex workers are driven into poverty by many other factors. Monthly average income reported by Syrian sex workers interviewed diminishes due to violations of rights and institutional exclusion targeting the members of this group. Syrian and sex workers are driven into poverty since they are overcharged for renting a house, need to look after their children and other dependent family members, have to pay administrative fines constantly imposed by law enforcement officers, have to leave a portion of their income to the establishment where they work, have to pay tribute to organized criminal groups and have to distribute their income due to many other factors.

“Do you know how many people I need to feed? For food and kitchen supplies, I spend more than many other homes. I want to do my best for my children and look after them as best as possible. That’s why I take care of their food, drinks, and their clothes. I have a mother, old and ill. She also has expenses to be covered. Even medicine alone is a large item of expenditure. At the end of the day, I have no money left. There’s no one else bringing money to the house. God forbid, but we do not have any money to use if a misfortune befalls us.”

Non-trans woman sex worker, 42, Mersin

Syrian sex workers have serious difficulties in access to the right to housing. In addition to the problems mentioned in previous chapters, poverty is one of the important factors limiting the access of Syrian sex workers to the right to housing. Many Syrian sex workers do not get financial support from their families because they don’t see them. As already mentioned, many Syrian sex workers have to distribute their economic income as they work in a sector involving many actors apart from them and operating mostly on criminal relations. At the same time, many other socioeconomic factors also worsen the economic situation of Syrian sex workers. Syrian sex workers, who struggle to survive in precariousness and poverty, either cannot rent a house or they find themselves obliged to pay rents higher than market values. While this drives Syrian sex workers to more poverty, it also eliminates the sustainability of their right to housing. Hence, many Syrian sex workers live, fearing that they will remain homeless.

“Above a certain age, it is difficult to find a roof over your head. It is tiresome. You start to beg for things. I do sex work, but there is no money left for me. I would be out in the cold if it were not for the girls. I cannot do this work, I do not
want to do it, but there is nothing else to do. Houses are also very expensive to rent. You can only find a house if you live together, 4 -5 girls. You cannot stay on the street. There is nowhere to go; no one would admit you home. On top of that, I am Syrian, so no one would let me in.”

Trans woman sex worker, 27, İstanbul

Unfortunately, there are not enough support mechanism for eliminating the vulnerability that Syrian sex workers experience due to poverty. Syrian sex workers are trapped in poverty because they have extremely limited access to financial support, in addition to social assistance such as fuel, clothing, food and the like, as a result of limited knowledge on this matter and also due to a lack of programs designed and implemented in accordance with their sensibilities. Gross violations of rights on one hand and poverty on the other reinforce the exclusion and hence vulnerability of Syrian sex workers.
F. TEMPORARY PROTECTION STATUS AND INFORMALITY

In order for the Syrians in Turkey to benefit from international protection, they must legally have a temporary protection status. Having a temporary protection status means having a temporary protection identity document. Syrians in Turkey are required to apply to relevant public institutions for registration in order to obtain temporary protection identity documents in accordance with conditions and procedures laid down by the Directorate General of Migration Management. Syrians who have not compromise public order, public security and public health according to the relevant legislation and who make an application for a temporary protection identity document can be placed under temporary protection status.

Syrians, registered in accordance with the principles set forth by the Foreigners and International Protection Law No. 6458 and the provisions of the Temporary Protection Regulation, can benefit from services of health-care, education, employment and similar services during their stay in Turkey under temporary protection status. Syrians, whose access to such services are linked to additional conditions in some cases since they are not citizens of the Republic of Turkey, can access information and services thanks to the temporary protection status.

There are also Syrians who do not have temporary protection status in Turkey because they do not have a temporary protection identity card issued by relevant public institutions. It is not possible for the Syrians, who have not applied or could not apply for a temporary protection identity card due to various reasons, to benefit from abovementioned services. Syrians who have not applied or could not apply for a temporary protection identity document due to socioeconomic factors or other reasons are socially and economically excluded and become vulnerable since they are not able to benefit from services or assistance.

Many Syrian sex workers do not have a temporary protection identity document. There are many Syrian sex workers who cannot make necessary applications because they have limited access to what they need to do in order to obtain a temporary protection identity document, who are hesitant to go to relevant centres fearing that their work would be uncovered or fearing ill treatment due to their sexual identity or are under the control of criminal individuals or groups. The severity of their social, cultural, economic and individual conditions causes many Syrian sex workers to be excluded from access to the knowledge and services required for social cohesion and from the temporary protection status.

“I have no ID. I entered Turkey somehow and had to cope with many things. I wanted to apply but I had a run of troubles. I had to work with someone. I was hesitant because of my sexual identity. I left the province, I worked with a lot of people. Now I’m afraid of what would happen if the police checked me. I am not doing anything wrong. I’m trying to earn my bread. But it’s been a long time since I entered the country and did not apply. If I could, I would have done it the first thing when I entered Turkey. But things do not always happen as predicted, you face things beyond your control.”
If anything happens to me now, I would be afraid of going to the police. I cannot go to the hospital, I cannot go anywhere. They would send me back to Syria if they discovered what I did. If I go there, I would die, here I live for the time being.”

Trans woman sex worker, 41, Mersin

The lack of support, information and referral programs for Syrian sex workers means that the registration process of many Syrian sex workers takes a longer time or does not happen at all. As mentioned in previous chapters, limited knowledge of many Syrian sex workers about existing programs is one of the factors that cause these processes to take longer time. In addition, the criminal processes that many Syrian sex workers face when doing sex work in Turkey and victimize them also cause delays in registration process. Poverty, violence, discrimination, lack of programs designed specifically for the needs of Syrian sex workers, limited access to information and services and many other factors cause Syrian sex workers not to have temporary protection status and thus prevent their access to services during their stay in Turkey.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Syrian sex workers are experiencing serious grievances since their lives are overwhelmed by many problem areas. Syrian sex workers have to deal with many problem areas like stigmatization, social exclusion, discrimination, hate speech, violence, abuse, poverty, murders and similar problem areas, but unfortunately do not have the means required to get out of the areas of victimization created by these problems. Syrian sex workers, trying to stay alive in a spiral of migration, refugee life, gender, sex work and violations of rights are living in a vicious cycle.

The elimination of problem areas outlined in the previous sections of this study and the improvement of the living and working conditions of Syrian sex workers can only be possible through a scientific, evidence-based and multi-sectoral approach which can solve the problems experienced by the Syrian sex workers in every field. From this point of view, a series of actors, who have a direct or indirect impact on the living and working conditions of Syrian sex workers need to come together and hold consultations for resolving the problems. These actors include among others: law-makers, policy makers and practitioners as well as administrators, service providers from all sectors and institutions in the field, academics engaged in scientific production on the subject and non-governmental organizations working in the field. Likewise, in addition to the stakeholders mentioned above, it is essential that the Syrian sex workers be also integrated into this process on a foot of equality and have a say in the designing and implementation of the policies and programs to be created in order to address the needs and solve the problems.

The Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association considers that the recommendations listed below should be taken into consideration in order to find effective solutions to the problem areas identified by this study which worsen the living and working conditions of the Syrian sex workers and prevent them from accessing services.
PROBLEM AREA 1
Public institutions and agencies have no policy intended for eliminating the problems of Syrian sex workers living in Turkey and for improving their capacity to access services. Many managers and service providers, despite being aware of the existence of the problems experienced by Syrian sex workers, think that a positive result cannot be achieved unless a systematic approach and practice are put in place. As can be seen in many cases, it is observed that some relevant public institutions and agencies have negative attitudes towards news reports, researches and similar studies conducted about cases of sex work among Syrians.

The lack of a field-based, evidence-based, and responsive policy has led to the aggravation of Syrian sex workers’ problems and to problems of social cohesion.

RECOMMENDATION
Public institutions and agencies acting as legislators, policy makers – practitioners and service providers in Turkey should not approach Syrian sex workers living in Turkey purely from a “security-based” viewpoint.

RECOMMENDATION
Relevant public institutions and agencies should not approach Syrian sex workers in Turkey purely from a “sexually transmitted infections” point of view.

RECOMMENDATION
Relevant public institutions and agencies need to develop a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach in order to strengthen the social cohesion of Syrian sex workers and their access to services, taking into account their human rights-based needs.

RECOMMENDATION
In order to accurately identify problem areas and needs of Syrian sex workers, relevant public institutions and agencies need to undertake a consultation process bringing together all the stakeholders in the field, including particularly non-governmental organizations and experts working with Syrian sex workers, to collect data from the field, to share them with relevant actors and to make analyses based on these data.

RECOMMENDATION
Relevant public institutions and agencies need to provide financial and soft support for the projects and programs implemented by non-governmental organizations and experts working in the field, in order to support policy development processes intended for eliminating the problems of Syrian sex workers.
**RECOMMENDATION**

All relevant public institutions and agencies need to work together and try to possess an equal level of knowledge on this issue in order to ensure that the policies developed on the issue are implemented in a coordinated manner and to prevent and to avoid disruptions of actions carried out in the field.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Relevant public institutions and organizations should provide support to specialized individuals and organizations, especially NGOs, when conducting studies about Syrians in the sex work sector, their problems and needs. It is necessary to find solutions to the problems by making them visible rather than making them invisible.
PROBLEM AREA 2
Relevant public institutions and agencies have little if any knowledge and awareness about the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers. This prevents Syrian sex workers from accessing the institutional support they need.

RECOMMENDATION
Necessary programs required for informing relevant public institutions and agencies about the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers should be designed and implemented in a multi-sectoral and evidence-based manner.

RECOMMENDATION
Relevant personnel working in units affiliated to public institutions and agencies responsible for procedures about Syrians under temporary protection and providing them with services should be informed and strengthened through programs to be jointly prepared with the support of NGOs and experts working on Syrian sex workers, providing services and doing advocacy in the field, and these programs should be implemented in a sustainable manner.

RECOMMENDATION
Relevant public institutions and organizations should carry out data collection and needs analysis in order to map the needs and problems of Syrian sex workers in their specific fields of work. Data collection and needs analyses on this issue should be periodically updated and shared with relevant actors.

RECOMMENDATION
Relevant public institutions and agencies should have up-to-date information on activities undertaken by NGOs and experts in the field about the problems experienced by Syrian sex workers during their daily lives and the needs for eliminating these problems; conduct periodical consultation meetings and carry out joint actions with the non-governmental organizations and experts undertaking these activities.

RECOMMENDATION
Intra-institutional awareness raising and information activities to be carried out by related public institutions and agencies regarding the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers should not be carried out only at the central level. Relevant ministries and general directorates need to carry out such activities at the local level and relevant provinces in order to be able to correctly identify the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers, taking into account local conditions and to raise awareness in the light of factual information.

RECOMMENDATION
Relevant public institutions and agencies should design and implement a mapping work on actions taken in the countries in the region concerned or in other countries. In addition to the needs analysis, a policy that responds to the unique conditions in Turkey needs to be designed and implemented through the mapping study to be realized.
PROBLEM AREA 3

A significant majority of NGOs working on refugee and humanitarian assistance have a very low level of knowledge about Syrian sex workers’ problems and needs. This limits the access of many Syrian sex workers to the services they need.

RECOMMENDATION

Nongovernmental organizations working on refugees should contact with other non-governmental organizations working with Syrian sex workers and conduct consultation meetings on the problems and needs of this vulnerable population group.

RECOMMENDATION

Non-governmental organizations working on refugees should design their service promotion, information and dissemination efforts in line with the sensitivities of Syrian sex workers in order to ensure that Syrian sex workers can reach their services in a sustainable and easy way. In order to strengthen the access of Syrian sex workers to these services, it is necessary to hold coordination meetings on outreach activities that needs be carried out together with other non-governmental organizations working with Syrian sex workers.

RECOMMENDATION

Non-governmental organizations working on refugees should train their outreach staff, social workers and services providers from other professional groups about the issue to ensure a more sustainable and easy access of Syrian sex workers to their services. The programs of the trainings to be delivered should be formulated and implemented through the support of non-governmental organizations working with Syrian sex workers.

RECOMMENDATION

Programs currently implemented by non-governmental organizations working on refugees should be updated in a way to also cover the needs of Syrian sex workers, and Syrian sex workers should be considered as a disadvantaged group in accessing services in each program and project and should be included in relevant programs.
PROBLEM AREA 4

Service providers who are staff members of protection and support mechanisms working in different areas (physicians, nurses, health officers, lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, social support workers, sociologists, protection officers, etc.) have a low level of knowledge about the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers. This limits the access of Syrian sex workers to the protection and support services they need.

RECOMMENDATION

A needs analysis for service providers should be carried out in order to find out the information needed by staff members of service-providing institutions about problems and needs of Syrian sex workers. Training and information programs should be developed on the basis of this needs analysis.

RECOMMENDATION

Service providers working in different sectors need to be included in the training programs related to the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers to be designed and implemented particularly through the guidance of the public institutions and organizations they are affiliated with and with the support of the professional chambers and NGOs working in the field.

RECOMMENDATION

It should be ensured that the trainings to be provided to service providers from different sectors be sustainable and implemented in all the regions of Turkey where needed.
PROBLEM AREA 5
Syrian sex workers have extremely limited access to information on the services they need. This limitation also limits the access of Syrian sex workers to these services.

RECOMMENDATION
Various actors including particularly relevant public institutions and agencies as well as non-governmental organizations should carry out outreach activities to reach Syrian sex workers and disseminate information on the services needed by Syrians.

RECOMMENDATION
Peer training programs should be developed and implemented through training for trainers for Syrian sex workers. In order to strengthen the access of Syrian sex workers especially to the services they need and the information on these services, peer trainings should be delivered in a sustainable way, particularly through the support of service providers and other experts in the field.
PROBLEM AREA 6

Syrian sex workers are being criminalized due to being sex workers. Criminalization pushes Syrian sex workers to work in unsafe and unhealthy environments, which causes a degradation of the general health and human rights situation of Syrian sex workers.

RECOMMENDATION

Legislation on both sex work and international protection should be updated and situations that further criminalize Syrian sex workers should be eliminated. Applicants of international protection or status holders in particular should no longer be targeted on grounds of doing sex work and through ambiguous justifications such as “public order”, “public security”, “public health” and the possibility of withdrawal of the guarantees provided by international protection applications or status should be eliminated.

RECOMMENDATION

Constant “prostitution” operations undertaken against Syrian sex workers should be limited to the cases of human trafficking, all forms of violence and commercial sexual exploitation of children. An effective fight should be put up against all persons and groups who keep Syrian sex workers in the sector by use of coercion, threatening, blackmailing or deceit or who exploit them physically, sexually, emotionally or economically; it is also important to put an end to law enforcement practices which victimize persons doing sex work to earn a living.

RECOMMENDATION

All arbitrary administrative actions taken by law enforcement officers against Syrian sex workers should be stopped, considering that these actions push members of this group to work in unsafe and unhealthy environments.
PROBLEM AREA 7

Syrian sex workers live in a constant cycle of violence. Syrian sex workers, who have to live in the heart of physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence, cannot be protected nor can access to post-violence justice mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATION

An anti-violence policy based on a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach and related effective programs should be established in order to combat all kinds of violence targeting Syrian sex workers, through particularly the support and coordination of relevant public institutions and agencies and by taking into consideration the recommendations and data provided by non-governmental organizations working in the field. Concrete steps need to be taken on how to prevent violence against Syrian sex workers and how to protect Syrian sex workers against violence, on the basis of such policies and programs.

RECOMMENDATION

Relevant public institutions and agencies should monitor, report and document violence against Syrian sex workers. These actions should be shared with non-governmental organizations working in the field; preventive and protective actions should be carried out on the basis of the data about the situation in the field.

RECOMMENDATION

Cases of violence against Syrian sex workers should be effectively investigated by law enforcement officers and the process of prosecution should be carried out fairly. Perpetrators should not be rewarded with impunity, but should be duly punished.

RECOMMENDATION

Syrian sex workers should be provided with an easy and quick access to post-violence protection and support mechanisms they need. In this respect, it is necessary to establish coordination among public institutions and agencies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders providing services and to formulate effective service policies.

RECOMMENDATION

Law enforcement officers who use violence against Syrian sex workers should be subject to an effective investigation. Law enforcement officers who are found to have committed violence after an effective investigation should be duly punished.
RECOMMENDATION

Legislation on hate crimes should be formulated in order to effectively punish cases of hate speech and hate crimes stemming from grounds of migrant status, refugee status, sexual identity and occupational status in a manner responsive to the sensitivities of Syrian sex workers in their experiences with violence.

RECOMMENDATION

A comprehensive training program about the post-violence services needed by Syrian sex workers should be delivered for law enforcement officers and judicial staff members such as prosecutors and judges contacted by Syrian sex workers particularly after cases of violence. It is important to raise the awareness of law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges in order to ensure that Syrian sex workers are both protected against violence and supported after violence.

RECOMMENDATION

Capacity building activities should be undertaken by relevant public institutions and NGOs in order to strengthen the capacity of Syrian sex workers to apply to relevant institutions to receive preventive and supportive services after exposure to violence.

RECOMMENDATION

It is necessary to strengthen the access of Syrian sex workers who are victims of violence to shelters, a post-violence protection and support mechanism, including particularly guest house services provided by public institutions and agencies. In entering shelters, people should not be discriminated against because of their refugee status, occupational status or sexual identity. Where existing shelters are insufficient, actions should be immediately taken to establish new shelters with adequate capacity.

RECOMMENDATION

An effective and responsive social cohesion program for Syrian sex workers should be developed and implemented in order to prevent the violence that Syrian sex workers are exposed to or to increase post-violence protection. In addition, as part of the social cohesion process, programs should be developed and implemented in order to eliminate conflicts that may arise from time to time between Syrian sex workers and sex workers of Turkish nationality.
PROBLEM AREA 8

Syrian sex workers are stigmatized and discriminated in many areas during their daily lives. Stigmatization and discrimination severely limit the access of Syrian sex workers to services in various areas.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to be able to combat stigmatization and discrimination against Syrian sex workers, a national consultation process should be undertaken with the participation of various actors including particularly public institutions and agencies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. A policy and a strategy driven by data and human rights should be put into practice in the light of principles stemming from the national strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

The cases of discrimination to which Syrian sex workers are subjected should be monitored, reported and documented through coordination of relevant actors including particularly public institutions and agencies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. The data that will emerge after these activities should be used effectively in advocacy processes.

RECOMMENDATION

An anti-discrimination legislation should be formulated in order to effectively punish cases of discrimination stemming from grounds of migrant status, refugee status, sexual identity and occupational status in a manner responsive to the sensitivities of Syrian sex workers in their experiences with discrimination.

RECOMMENDATION

A comprehensive training program about the post-discrimination services needed by Syrian sex workers should be delivered for law enforcement officers and judicial staff members such as prosecutors and judges contacted by Syrian sex workers particularly after cases of discrimination. It is important to raise the awareness of law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges in order to ensure that Syrian sex workers are both protected against discrimination and supported after discrimination.

RECOMMENDATION

Capacity building activities should be undertaken by relevant public institutions and NGOs in order to strengthen the capacity of Syrian sex workers to apply to relevant institutions to receive preventive and supportive services after exposure to discrimination.
PROBLEM AREA 9

Syrian sex workers may become victims of human trafficking when entering the sex work sector or doing sex work. Apart from human trafficking, many Syrian sex workers may become victims of commercial sexual exploitation or sexual abuse during childhood. Cases of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse damage the social cohesion processes needed by Syrian sex workers throughout their lives. Many Syrians are forced to enter the sex work sector after being subjected to such acts.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to combat human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children, sexual abuse of children, it is necessary to formulate an effective and sustainable policy based on the problems and needs of the subjects in the field as well as a national action plan based on this policy. Effective and dissuasive steps should be taken in order to prevent Syrian girls from being married off, whether or not for money, being removed from family and social support environments and being exposed to all sorts of exploitation and abuse. The policy and action plan to be developed should be designed and implemented in the light of recommendations particularly those of relevant public institutions and agencies as well as of non-governmental organizations.

RECOMMENDATION

Training programs should be undertaken through the contribution and support of various relevant stakeholders in order to raise the knowledge level and awareness of law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges and lawyers dealing with human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children and sexual abuse of children about victims’ sensitivities.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to effectively protect victims of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children and sexual abuse, it is necessary to provide necessary services in accordance with victims’ sensitivities.

RECOMMENDATION

Perpetrators of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children and sexual abuse should be duly punished; impunity should not be allowed.

RECOMMENDATION

Effective and sustainable programs should be designed and implemented in order to provide access to alternative employment for Syrian sex workers who have been victims of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation and who have entered the sex worker sector due to such victimization and want to leave the sector.
**RECOMMENDATION**

Public officials alleged to have a role in human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children should be effectively investigated and those proven to have a role should be duly punished.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Awareness-raising programs and capacity-building mechanisms intended for strengthening the access of victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation to justice mechanisms should be designed and implemented in a sustainable manner through the support of non-governmental organizations working in the field.
PROBLEM AREA 10
Syrian sex workers face many difficulties in accessing justice mechanisms. Since Syrian sex workers have limited access to justice mechanisms, they are constantly exposed to violations of their rights.

RECOMMENDATION
In order to strengthen the access of Syrian sex workers to justice mechanisms, it is necessary to formulate and implement capacity building programs through the support of particularly public institutions and agencies, non-governmental organizations and bar associations.

RECOMMENDATION
Existing mechanisms of access to justice should be improved by also taking into account the sensitivities of Syrian sex workers, through the support of NGOs working on refugees, and stakeholders working in the field should revise their legal support services by taking into account the demands of Syrian sex workers.

RECOMMENDATION
Bar Associations should strengthen the capacities of their relevant internal units in order to strengthen the capacity of Syrian sex workers to access to justice through the support and guidance of non-governmental organizations working in the field and other professional organizations. Different units, central bureaus, boards and committees of Bar Associations such as committees of women’s rights, children’s rights, refugee rights, legal aid, health-care rights and human rights should be structured and strengthen their service capacities in a way to respond to the needs of the Syrian sex workers.
PROBLEM AREA 11

Most of the Syrian sex workers live in poverty. Since Syrian sex workers are unable to access formal employment areas due to their sexual identity, lose their income as a result of many socioeconomic factors and become impoverished due to economic violence of many criminal groups and individuals, they are driven into the periphery of social and economic life.

RECOMMENDATION

There is need for effectively combatting intermediaries and organized criminal groups which inflict economic violence on Syrian sex workers. Judicial units are required to carry out effective investigations of economic violence and punish them.

RECOMMENDATION

Administrative fines, which drive Syrian sex workers to more poverty, should be stopped.

RECOMMENDATION

Relevant public institutions and agencies as well as non-governmental organizations providing social assistance should make accessible information on their programs and services in order to provide Syrian sex workers with access to social assistance in different areas, including particularly financial support and to allow them to fight poverty.

RECOMMENDATION

It is necessary to combat discriminatory practices in the field of social assistance mechanisms provided to general Syrian population in order to make them available to Syrian sex workers as well. Relevant actors including particularly public institutions and agencies as well as non-governmental organizations in the field should provide Syrian sex workers with assistance including clothing, food and financial aid.

RECOMMENDATION

Since Syrian sex workers have limited access to the right to housing due to poverty; guesthouses and similar facilities should be made available to them, including through the support of public institutions and agencies.

RECOMMENDATION

Syrian sex workers who are driven into poverty due to the socioeconomic conditions should be empowered to be able to be employed in sectors other than sex work if they wish to do so.
PROBLEM AREA 12

Many Syrian sex workers have not applied for temporary protection status and do not have a status. Syrian sex workers, who do not have temporary protection status due to various socioeconomic conditions, have limited access to services.

RECOMMENDATION

Syrian sex workers need to be informed accurately and quickly about the registration procedures required for them to have temporary protection status. It is necessary to carry out awareness raising activities that will enable relevant actors, including particularly public institutions and agencies as well as non-governmental organizations working in the field to inform Syrian sex workers about the issue.

RECOMMENDATION

Public officers contacted by Syrian sex workers during registration process for temporary protection status should be trained by taking into account the sensitivities of Syrian sex workers and these trainings should be delivered in a sustainable way. Such training courses should dwell on the impact of issues such as refugee status, migration, sex work, gender and sexual identity on the lives of Syrian sex workers.

RECOMMENDATION

Personnel of relevant public institutions and agencies, including particularly governor and district governor offices, provincial police directorates and provincial directorates of migration management in charge of registration procedures should keep in constant contact with non-governmental organizations working with Syrian sex workers and carry out necessary procedures in coordination.

RECOMMENDATION

As part of humanitarian assistance programs, specific intervention programs should be developed and implemented for key and vulnerable population groups such as refugee and migrant sex workers, LGBTIs and people living with HIV. Fund providers, national and international aid and development agencies operating in this field or providing support should support the relevant programs of non-governmental organizations in a sustainable and encouraging manner.
CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

Some of the Syrians who fled the civil war, economic difficulties and other humanitarian crisis conditions in their country and who took refuge in Turkey started to work as sex workers. The presence of Syrian sex workers, reported to be in significant numbers according to the interviews conducted during the study, was driven into invisibility. This invisibility means that the problems and needs of Syrian sex workers with respect to their general health and human rights status are made invisible and ignored.

Syrian sex workers who are driven into the periphery of social and economic life by the effects of gender, migration, refugee status, sex work, sexual identity, poverty and similar dynamics are being tested by challenges of stigmatization, discrimination, violence, murders and suicides. With very limited access to justice mechanisms following violations of their rights, Syrian sex workers become victims of violations of rights as well as of impunity in a vicious circle. Syrian sex workers whose general human rights situation deteriorates are deprived of social cohesion instruments in Turkey and are denied access to services.

Syrian sex workers, whose general human rights situation deteriorates due to various socioeconomic factors, have very limited access to the services provided by various institutions including particularly public institutions and organizations as well as NGOs and other specialized institutions. This limitation makes Syrian sex workers still more vulnerable as a disadvantaged population group. Driven into invisibility within the context of general and mainstream migration, refugee status and gender studies, Syrian sex workers remain in a disadvantaged position due to the lack of services and advocacy works developed on the basis of their needs and human rights.

It is imperative to develop policies and associated action plans through an approach that will respond to the problems of Syrian sex workers. Since the issue of sex work among Syrians cannot be regarded solely as an issue of public order, public security and public health, it is imperative to address it by means of a multi-sectoral and holistic approach through a series of programs to be developed with the contribution of all stakeholders. It is crucial to put into practice policies, strategies and action plans to be developed by taking into consideration the active contribution and recommendations of non-governmental organizations such as Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association and Foundation for Solidarity with Women who work with Syrian sex workers and provide services or undertake advocacy for them and through the support of relevant public institutions and agencies, other non-governmental organizations and specialized institutions and agencies.

In addition to issues such as migration, refugee status and gender discussed frequently recently; the vulnerability of Syrians under temporary protection in connection with sex work and their needs arising from sex work-related vulnerability need to be assessed as well through a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach by means of consultations to be undertaken with the subjects concerned. We hope that this study will contribute to the process of producing evidence based solutions to the problems of Syrian sex workers, stuck in invisibility, on the basis of their needs and guidance of the above mentioned principles.
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