



Oral Statement to the CEDAW Committee: Turkey
82nd CEDAW Session
13th June 2022

Thank you, Madam Chair and esteemed CEDAW Committee.

I read this statement on behalf of Havle Women's Association, and Musawah.

As a local Muslim feminist organization, Havle Women's Association and Musawah, as an international organization, we want to highlight two specific and critical issues.

CHILD AND FORCED MARRIAGE ISSUE: The legal age of marriage in Turkey is 18 as provided by the Turkish Civil Code (TCC) in the article 124. However, the TCC provides that those aged 17 may marry with the permission of their parents. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the condition of parental consent is often overlooked in practice, making the *de facto* accepted age 17.

Furthermore, although Turkey states that the 'marry your rapist' practice does not remove criminal responsibility, we note with concern that on 16 January 2020, Turkish Parliament debated yet another 'marry your rapist' bill.

Havle Women's Association and Musawah, recommend the CEDAW Committee urge the State party to:

1. Ensure that the government enacts legislation to raise the minimum age to 18 without any exceptions including but not limited to parental consent or judicial permission.
2. Take active steps to prevent the resurfacing of similar 'marry your rapist' legislation, and to proactively outlaw the practice.

THE SURNAME ISSUE: Article 187 of the Turkish Civil Code (TCC) provides that the 'wife shall take on her husband's surname after marriage'. Since this Article is a mandatory rule, spouses cannot deviate from it.

We recommend the CEDAW Committee urge the State party to:

3. Allow women to maintain their maiden names after marriage and give their surnames to their children if they choose to do so.
4. Upon divorce, allow women who had previously changed their maiden names to their husband's name, to retain that surname if they choose to do so, instead of requiring them to change it back to their maiden name.

Thank you.