

# Summary

## Honour related crime in Great-Britain, Germany and Turkey

### A survey of information on the nature, scale and approach

In 2006 the Minister for Immigration and Integration sent a policy programme regarding “honour-related violence” to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament. The aim of this policy programme is to “further develop social prevention, increase the possibilities of bringing (possible) honour-related violence to the attention of the proper authorities, adequately provide assistance and refuge to victims and criminally prosecute the perpetrators”. In order to be able to learn from insights and experiences gained in other countries, WODC, the research and documentation centre of the Ministry of Justice, was requested to conduct an inventory study of relevant literature, focussing on Great Britain, Germany and Turkey. It appears that in these countries, just as in the Netherlands, the attention for honour-related violence is of a relatively recent date and government policy in this area is still very limited. There has been little scholarly evaluation not only of government measures but also for example of the activities of support agencies. Therefore, this report does not provide an overview of approaches that have been found to be effective, but offers a state of the art overview that can inspire policymakers, implementing bodies and social workers and give them new ideas.

### Research questions and method of the study

The following research questions are answered in the literature study:

- 1 How is honour-related violence described and which phenomena are regarded as or deemed to be linked to honour-related violence in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey?
- 2 Has any research been conducted into the nature and scale of honour-related violence in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey? If so, what are the results?
- 3 Has any research been conducted into groups (at risk) in which honour-related violence occurs, also broken down according to region of origin or according to ethnic, religious or political background in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey? If so, what are the results?
- 4 What is known in British, German or Turkish literature about possible similarities or differences in the nature and scale of honour-related violence in the countries or regions of origin and the countries or regions to which people have emigrated?
- 5 Does the (local or national) government in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey take policy measures in respect of honour-related violence? If so, what are these measures and at which target groups are they aimed?

- 6 Which activities are developed by private organisations in Great Britain, Turkey and Germany within the framework of combating honour-related violence?
- 7 Have the activities, if any, for preventing and tackling honour-related violence been evaluated? If so, what are the results of this evaluation?

In answering these questions we have used research studies and (government) reports on various forms of honour-related violence and on phenomena deemed to be linked to this in the countries in question. In addition to this, publications of private organisation, which provide insight into their experiences of and approach to honour-related violence, have been used. The publications were found by carrying out an Internet search using relevant terms, by following references to relevant literature and by making personal contact with researchers in the countries concerned. Information from publications, which were available in paper format or on the Internet in the period up to and including January 2006, has been incorporated in this report. We further refer to a single publication that appeared after this date. We did not draw a sharp line in respect of the publication date from which reports were incorporated.

The available sources were found to have their limitations. We particularly found too few publications on which we could base generalised quantitative results. Therefore, this report provides more insight into the various manifestations and backgrounds of honour-related violence than into the actual prevention of honour-related violence.

### **Descriptions of honour and honour-related violence**

The term “honour” (“eer” in Dutch) according to the (Dutch) Van Dale dictionary means: “esteem, recognition”. However, perceptions of “honour” and “honourable” change over time. A survey of the anthropological literature also shows variations in the definition of “honour” in the different cultural contexts. The current discussion on honour-related violence mostly concerns honour in the relationship domain, in particular the so-called family honour. A rough distinction is made between forms of family honour that mainly relate to the man and those that especially relate to the woman. This is expressed in relation to the man in terms such as “reputation”, “pride” and “standing in the form of status, money and power”. The reputation of the man is partly influenced by the chastity of his female family members. As regards the notion of honour in relation to the woman, the determinative aspect of the woman’s chastity for the family honour is emphasised. Women have to adhere to specific sexual codes of behaviour. If these codes are breached or are rumoured to have been breached, this will result in the loss of the entire family’s honour. In groups which have a strong perception of honour, a breach of the woman’s chastity leads to the necessity of cleansing the (family) honour. One of the means of restoring the family honour is the use of violence against the person who caused the loss of honour, with murder as the most extreme form. In the Netherlands the term “eerwraak” (“eer” meaning “honour” and “wraak” meaning “revenge”) was and is sometimes used for this. However, apart from murder, there are other forms of violence which can, in certain cases, be deemed to be “honour-related”. For that reason, Ferwerda and Van Leiden (2005) have formulated a broader, provisional, working definition of honour-

related violence. This definition assumes that victims can be both male and female. Ferwerda and Van Leiden describe different forms of and reasons for honour-related violence. A survey of the literature reveals that somewhat different emphases are placed in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey.

## **Results**

### *Contexts and descriptions in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey*

In Great Britain, Germany and Turkey attention is given to honour killings as a form of honour-related violence. The London police and/or the German Federal Investigation Bureau place the emphasis on women as victims. In Turkey the terms honour and tradition killing are used, whereby scientists do not agree as to which features distinguish an honour killing from a tradition killing. These terms are included without distinction in the registrations of the Turkish police and state police and as a result of this, the figures refer to blood-feud killings of male victims and honour-related killings of women and men.

Apart from murder, other phenomena are linked to family honour and/or honour-related violence, in particular forced marriages and suicides, in the aforementioned countries. In Great Britain honour-related violence is regarded as a form of domestic violence.

### *Investigation into the nature and scale of honour-related violence in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey*

In all three aforementioned countries there is little data available on the occurrence of honour-related violence and the available figures suffer various limitations. In respect of Great Britain there are only figures available from the reports of forced marriages made to the Forced Marriage Unit and the London police (hundreds of cases per year) and the numbers of requests for help handled by women's aid organisations. The London police are currently working on a study of honour killings. The German Federal Investigation Bureau reports 55 registered honour killings (including attempts) in almost 10 years. Regarding forced marriages in Germany there are only regional figures available on the number of requests for assistance to various organisations. Data from the registrations of suspects of the Turkish police (working in the towns) and from the registrations of perpetrators of the Turkish state police (working in the country) suggest that between 2000 and the end of 2005 there were, at least, close on 1500 cases of (attempted) murder/manslaughter of which the motive was honour or tradition.

In Great Britain it is assumed that the victims of honour-related violence are particularly women of Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi origins. Relatively many victims of Turkish origin are known to the German Federal Investigation Bureau and help organisations. There is no data available on the regions of origin in both countries. The majority of victims of honour/tradition killings in the registrations of the Turkish police and state police, in which phenomena such as blood-feud killings have been included, are men. Victims of forced marriages and suicides are, it appears, chiefly women in East Turkey. In all countries the perpetrators are chiefly men: husbands or male family members, whether or not urged on by mothers(in-law).

### *Investigation into groups at risk*

The British government, private organisations and researchers particularly focus on South-East-Asian women as possible victims of honour-related violence. Many of these women are Muslim. There is no specific information about their region of origin and their ethnic, religious or political background. In Germany Turkish women, who are also Muslim, would seem to be the main group at risk. Within this group, the Kurds are often mentioned as the group in which honour-related violence occurs relatively often. However, various authors contend that honour-related violence occurs in groups of different origin and religion in Germany. The Turkish registration and research data shows that honour-related violence is committed to an important extent by persons from South, East and South-East Turkey, both men and women and both in the country and in the towns. Various researchers in Turkey deny that honour/tradition killings are mainly a Kurdish problem.

In the three countries studied, as explanation of the phenomenon is usually put forward that it is a cultural based phenomenon, that originally occurs chiefly in patriarchal societies. Various government agencies, support organisations and researchers claim that honour-related violence has nothing to do with religion, and Islam in particular. However, some 'ordinary' Muslims appear to justify honour-related violence with a reference to (in their view) religious norms.

### *Areas of origin versus areas to which people have emigrated*

As reliable figures on the occurrence of honour-related violence in the aforementioned countries is scarce, a comparison of the scale of the problem between origin and destination countries of migrants is not possible. In Turkey internal migration is suggested as a possible explanation for the fact that honour/tradition killings are committed to an important extent by men from South, East or South-East Turkey, whereas most murders are not committed in these regions. In addition to this, the question as to which influence migration has on honour-related violence also receives attention in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey, whereby it is noted that migrants under the influence of a more modern environment can attach both more and less importance to traditional norms. Compared to the Netherlands, Germany attracted more skilled workers from urban areas in Turkey in the past and the Netherlands more unskilled workers from rural areas. However, it is unclear whether the chance of honour-related violence occurring amongst Turks (including Kurds) in the Netherlands is greater or smaller than amongst Turks in Germany.

### *Policy measures of the (local or national) government*

In the three aforementioned countries government attention for honour-related violence is of a relatively recent date. The measures taken range from setting up investigative committees and establishing agencies that specifically deal with certain phenomena to amending the law and supporting private support organisations; women being the main target group.

In Great Britain the government has been devoting attention to honour-related violence within the framework of the domestic violence theme for some years now. In the past years the attention for honour killings, in particular, has increased. In addition to this, various measures have been taken in the field of forced marriages. However, the extent to which these measures have already been implemented is not always clear. In Germany, government attention for honour-related violence, in

particular forced marriages and honour killings, has increased since 2004 as a result of the increased attention for the problems of integration. In 2005 and 2006 the Federal German government and several federal states took the initiative to take statutory measures to combat forced marriages. Several federal states provide financial support to private agencies or have set up working groups to further study the issue. In the past years Turkey has also devoted, partly as a result of negotiations with the European Union on admission to the EU, increasing attention to violence against women. This has resulted in various amendments to the law, including an amendment to the Turkish Criminal Code in 2005. The provision has been included in this code that “blood-feud killings” and murder “of which the motive is “tradition”” will be punishable by lifelong imprisonment and as a result of this, violation of one’s honour as a motive for such acts will no longer lead to a reduced sentence. However, it is contended that only a turnaround in culture will bring about actual changes in practice. Apart from in the field of legislation, the Turkish government is also active in the field of victim aid by opening (charging third parties to open) refuges.

#### *Activities of private organisations*

In Great Britain, Germany and Turkey various human rights and women’s organisations are active. They are involved in conducting campaigns against various forms of violence against women and in providing aid and assistance to victims and/or information.

#### *Evaluation of measures and activities*

The attention for honour-related violence in the countries studied is of a relatively recent date. Specific government measures in this field, to the extent already in place, have only been in force for a short time. Therefore, we did not find any scholarly evaluations of government measures or any independent evaluations of the activities of private organisations either.

#### **In conclusion: how can we use this in the Netherlands?**

This report shows that a few things are known about the nature of honour-related violence in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey, but that there are no unambiguous descriptions and contexts. Much uncertainty remains about the extent of the problem due to for example, differences in definitions and uncertainty as to what extent the registrations describe the actual numbers of cases. The government approach to phenomena that are regarded as honour-related violence is still mainly in its infancy and therefore has not yet been evaluated. The effectiveness of the activities of the women’s aid organisations, which have often been focussing on honour-related violence for a much longer time, have not been evaluated either. This means that those persons in the Netherlands, who are currently involved in the development of an approach to honour-related violence, can look to the initiatives that are being taken in Great Britain, Germany and Turkey as a source of inspiration, but will not yet find any proven effective approaches in these countries.