



## Resolution 1681 (2009)<sup>1</sup>

# Urgent need to combat so-called “honour crimes”

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Drawing attention to its [Resolution 1327 \(2003\)](#) on so-called “honour crimes”, the Parliamentary Assembly notes that the problem, far from diminishing, has worsened, including in Europe. It mainly affects women, who are its most frequent victims, both in Europe and the rest of the world, especially in patriarchal and fundamentalist communities and societies.
2. All forms of violence against women and girls in the name of traditional codes of honour are considered to be so-called “honour crimes” and constitute a serious violation of fundamental human rights. Such violence takes various forms, such as “honour killings”, assault, torture, restrictions on free association, captivity or imprisonment, and interference in the choice of a spouse or partner.
3. The Assembly firmly denounces these crimes and dismisses any form of excuse for them: no tradition or culture can invoke any kind of honour to violate women’s fundamental rights. There is no honour in so-called “honour crimes”. The Assembly is determined to put a stop to this practice as a matter of great urgency.
4. It consequently asks Council of Europe member states to:
  - 4.1. draw up and put into effect national action plans to combat violence against women, including violence committed in the name of so-called “honour”, if they have not already done so;
  - 4.2. provide quality education and training for all, respectful of girls’ and boys’, women’s and men’s rights, in application of its [Resolution 1669 \(2009\)](#) on the rights of today’s girls: the rights of tomorrow’s women;
  - 4.3. introduce education with regard to relationships and sexual and reproductive health for both girls and boys, particularly with a view to teaching respect for their partners and for fundamental human rights;
  - 4.4. continue to engage or begin a dialogue with religious authorities, in order to clarify with them the fact that their religion requires respect for the life and freedom of every person, and that so-called “honour crimes” have no religious basis, and invite them to condemn them and to co-operate in their prevention;
  - 4.5. conduct awareness-raising campaigns in order to change mentalities and the behaviour which ensues:
    - 4.5.1. among the population in general, in order to make everyone aware of girls’ and women’s rights and of equality;
    - 4.5.2. among young people, not only to inform them of their rights, particularly the right to be open about their sexuality and to choose their partner, and to draw their attention to the existence of so-called “honour crimes”, but also to encourage them to report such crimes if necessary, and to request that their country’s authorities protect them;

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1. *Assembly debate* on 26 June 2009 (26th Sitting) (see [Doc. 11943](#), report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Mr Austin). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 26 June 2009 (26th Sitting). See also [Recommendation 1881 \(2009\)](#).



- 4.5.3. among the communities concerned, particularly minority ethnic communities or communities of immigrant origin, even at national level, including adults, so as to promote the rights of girls and women and to show the intrinsic value of women, as well as men;
  - 4.6. raise awareness among those who work with children, in education and in the medico-social sector, so as to enable them to detect the risks of so-called “honour crimes”;
  - 4.7. raise awareness among journalists of the cruelty of such crimes and invite them to report such crimes and show their inhumanity, while preserving victims’ dignity and privacy;
  - 4.8. protect and support actual or potential victims:
    - 4.8.1. by creating an adequate provision of accommodation, geographically located wherever the need exists, so that they can hide from or be protected from their attackers;
    - 4.8.2. by setting up physical and psychological support programmes on a long-term basis, so as to enable them to rebuild their lives physically and psychologically;
    - 4.8.3. by helping them to establish or re-establish financial independence;
    - 4.8.4. by providing them, if necessary, with a new identity, as well as police protection;
  - 4.9. set up and publicise a helpline number which will provide answers to any questions about violence against women, and direct callers towards emergency assistance facilities;
  - 4.10. introduce either a complete database or draw up statistics which take account of the concept of so-called “honour crimes”; this is needed if the problem is to be understood more thoroughly;
  - 4.11. teach the police and judiciary about the complexity of so-called “honour crimes”, and particularly:
    - 4.11.1. teach the police officers responsible for investigations how to deal with victims and teach prosecution staff about the specific nature of these crimes and their identification, to enable them to collect as much evidence as possible of the specific nature of the offence when the reported facts give reason to believe that the crime may have been committed in the name of so-called “honour”;
    - 4.11.2. teach court staff about the specific nature of these crimes, how to conduct questioning and avoid putting pressure on victims, and how to deal with cases in accordance with the gravity of the violence committed;
    - 4.11.3. set up a specialised unit in the prosecution service to deal with so-called “honour crimes”, so that every individual involved is charged and, should they travel abroad, are the subject of extradition requests;
  - 4.12. support non-governmental organisations in host countries and countries of origin which play a vital role in prevention and assistance in this field, and which can liaise between immigrant communities and their countries of origin;
  - 4.13. support and finance the non-governmental organisations which fight against so-called “honour crimes” and support and accommodate victims.
5. It asks the national parliaments of Council of Europe member states to:
- 5.1. pass legislation, if they have not yet done so, to make so-called “honour crimes” offences, providing for penalties commensurate with the gravity of the acts committed both for their perpetrators and for any accomplices or any persons ordering such crimes, either by creating a specific offence or by making provision for penalties to be aggravated;
  - 5.2. provide for fair and equitable compensation commensurate with the seriousness of the damage suffered by the victim, if necessary with the assistance of a state-guaranteed fund;
  - 5.3. provide, after having evaluated the risks, judicial protection for actual or potential victims who report such facts, as well as for witnesses, including a prohibition on minors in danger leaving the country;
  - 5.4. provide funding for accommodation, assistance and support services for victims;
  - 5.5. develop policies and programmes to fight female poverty and the feminisation of poverty.

6. It encourages the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) to strengthen its programmes on gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence and to continue the dialogue between countries of the North and countries of the South about the implications of gender equality and the combating of serious violations of human rights.
7. It resolves to include the fight against the most severe forms of violence against women in its parliamentary assistance and co-operation programmes.