

JOURNEY OF A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

The **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence** (Istanbul Convention) is the first international treaty tackling specifically violence against women and domestic violence. The Istanbul Convention ensures that victims and their children get appropriate **support from state institutions and NGOs** so that they can **break free from violence**. The two stories depict the path a woman experiencing violence can take – in a country where the Istanbul Convention has not been implemented and in one where it has.



WITHOUT THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION



Ms. X's husband has been psychologically abusive for years, and recently started to push and hit her. Ms. X decides she can no longer take the abuse. She confides in her family, but they do not believe her and tell her that it is normal for a husband to sometimes beat his wife.

She goes to the police, but they do not believe her, blame her for the abuse and tell her this is a private family matter.

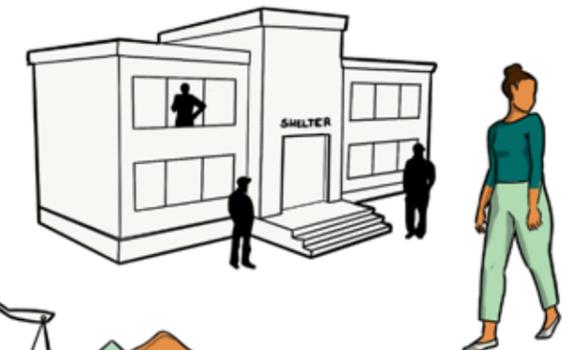


She goes to social services, but they ask her why she did not leave her husband sooner and only tell her to call the 24/7 helpline.



Ms. X calls the 24/7 helpline that refers her to a women's shelter, but she is told the shelter has no free bed.

She then goes to a generic shelter in which has space, but she must share a kitchen and bathroom with men, which makes her uncomfortable.



Ms. X finds a lawyer to take her case but she can barely afford the fees.

Ms. X feels hopeless and depressed, has difficulty falling asleep, experiences anxiety attacks and loses appetite.

Because of her deteriorating health, she loses her job and her family refuses to help her.

**I WILL DEPORT YOU
WE WILL TAKE
YOUR CHILDREN
AWAY NO
ONE WILL
BELIEVE
YOU**

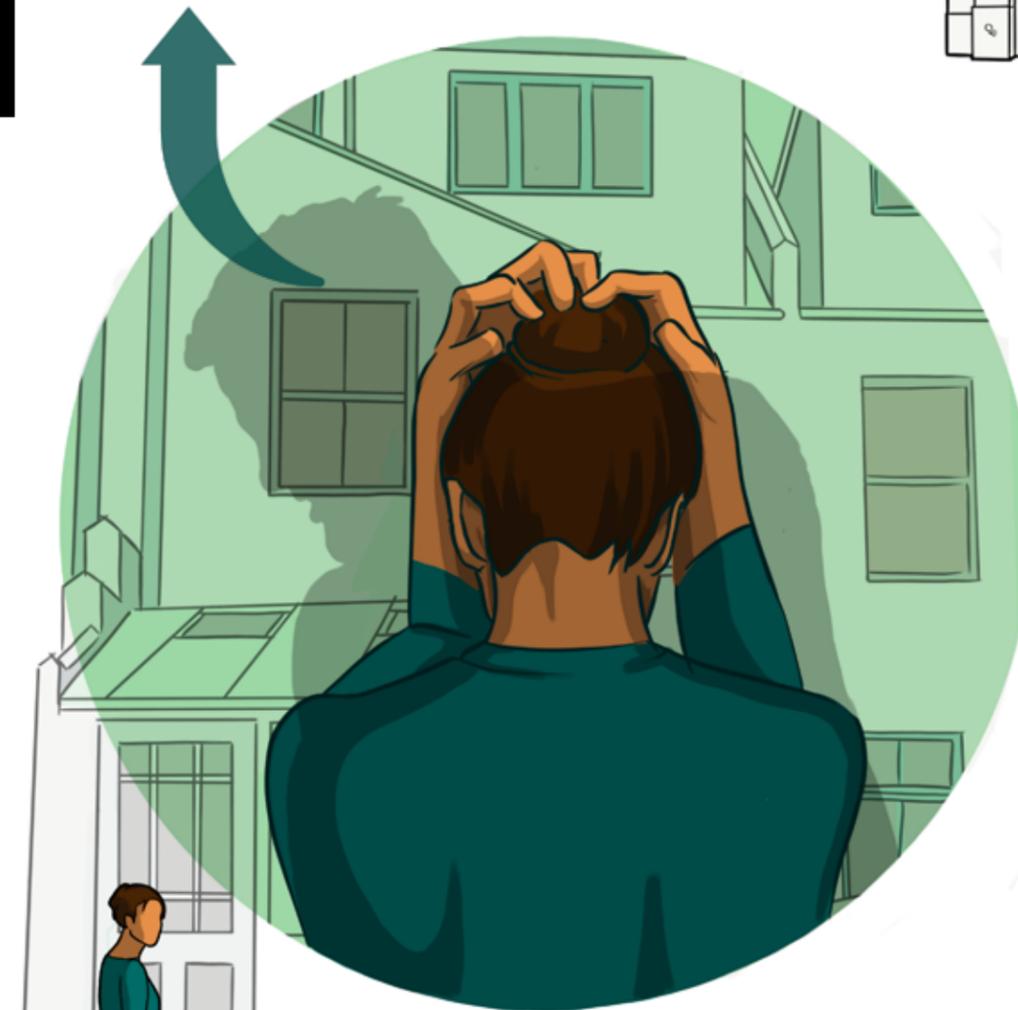


A) She therefore is left to sleep on the street.

B) Left with no other choice, Ms. X returns to her home and her abusive husband.



Ms. X is no longer financially stable and cannot pay her lawyer which makes it impossible to defend herself against her husband.





Ms. X goes to the women's advice centre, where an advisor walks her through her different options. Ms. X is surprised that the advisor is respectful and supportive as her husband always told her that no one would believe her.



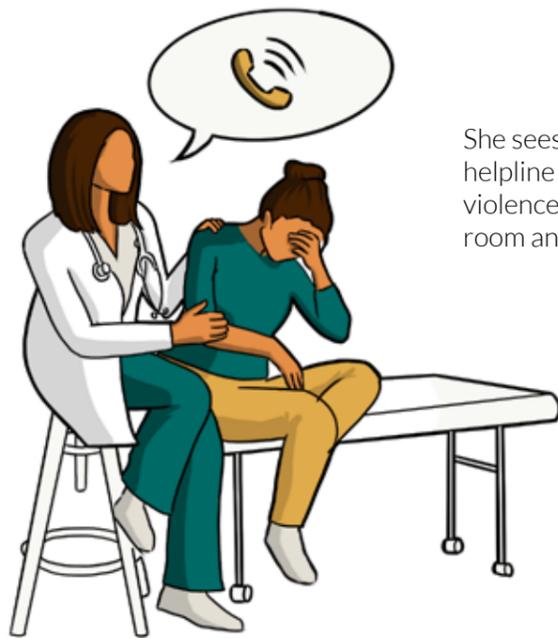
The Advisor conducts a risk assessment and recommends that Ms. X moves into a shelter, where she will be safe and receive legal, psychological, financial and housing support (and support for her children, if any).



Ms. X moves into the shelter, where she feels comfortable and is surrounded by women with similar stories.



She is given the contact of a women's advice centre that can support her in leaving her abusive husband.



She sees the number of a 24/7 helpline for victims of domestic violence in her doctor's waiting room and calls.

Ms. X's husband has been psychologically abusive for years, and recently started to push and hit her. Ms. X decides she can no longer take the abuse.



Although Ms X has suffered a lot, and often feels anxious, the shelter continues to support her and eventually, she manages to find a permanent home and receive financial benefits.

The shelter also refer Ms. X to a lawyer who helps her prepare a court case against her husband. Ms. X feels very nervous about going to court, but feels she can do so, because of the support she now receives.

When Ms. X goes to court, she notes that the judge interacts with her in a respectful and professional manner. The judge received training on the particular challenges which women experiencing violence face.



WITH THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU I CAN START A NEW LIFE

