



**SEXUAL
HARASSMENT
AND VIOLENCE
POLICY
DOCUMENT**

Effective Date:

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Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence **Sexual Harassment and Violence Policy Document**

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is merely an act of violence, not sexuality, about power and authority. There is no environment immune to these power dynamics, nor has the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence (CŞMD) ever been. To foster social change and transformation, each person must confront the brutal facts that they may be either the perpetrator or the survivor of violence someday and should take responsibility for their actions. Sexual violence can occur in any relationship, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this document is;

- a)** To present the institutional political approach of the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence against violence and harassment,
- b)** To provide a clear cut and updatable policy to be applied with an equal and fair approach in case of sexual harassment and violence cases that may occur within the Association,
- c)** To determine the responsibilities of the Association and the persons during and after the reporting of sexual violence and/or harassment cases,
- d)** To create a safe space for the members of the Association (staff, members, volunteers, and interns) and to ensure that the parties know their rights,
- e)** To provide a preventive-protective and remedial tool to prevent violent behaviors and their recurrence.

The principles and practices provided in this document cover all staff, the bodies of the Association (members and the alternate members of Board of Directors, Supervisory Board, Association's members), volunteers, and interns working actively in the Association.

This policy is applicable in those cases of actions that take place or occur;

- ⇒ within both the Association's office and fields of activity,
- ⇒ among the members of the Association (staff, members, volunteers, and interns),
- ⇒ outside the Association's premises but influence the Association's environment or have an impact on the activities and working environment of the Association.

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PRINCIPLES

In line with the principles adopted during the preparation, operation and updating of this document

The Association is;

1. Requiring no onus of proof in testimonies: No one is obliged to prove and document the violence they are exposed to. The process based on the survivor's testimony that carries an evidentiary weight is started immediately without seeking proof. The zero-tolerance policy is adopted in case of sexual violence. The Association acts without establishing any kind of hierarchy between the testimonies.

2. Encouraging and Supportive: During the process, due care and attention are paid to avoiding any action that may cause the applicants to be victimized or discouraged, lose their motivation, and which may damage the dignity and confidence of the parties. The Association is attentive to preventing such actions. It acts to operate mechanisms that empower the survivors of violence and support their recovery. In the support process, the Association refrains from questioning and accusing statements, behaviors, attitudes, and allusions that would increase the victimization.

3. Impartial/Having Fair Approach: People are treated equally, fairly, and impartially. The process is carried out by respecting the rights of the parties. The focus is on behavior, not persons, considering the fact that anyone can be the perpetrator or the survivor of sexual violence.

4. Protecting Confidentiality: The process is carried out in a manner that protects the privacy of the private lives of individuals who apply and are given a statement, at all stages. Persons involved in the reporting and review process of the notification are obliged to protect confidentiality and to deal with the process by respecting the psycho-social status and reputation of all persons, especially those who report the issue. The parties are not declared right or wrong until the process is completed. In the process, triggering, judgmental and accusatory words, behaviors, attitudes and allusions that will increase victimization are avoided.

5. Inclusive: In line with the vision and mission of the Association, its approach to sexual violence and harassment cases is also inclusive and intersectional. Possible power relations (ethnicity, gender, position, status, etc.) between the parties are taken into account, regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation.

6. Intervenes on time: Notifications are responded within the timelines defined in the directive. It is ensured that all parties are informed about the process and its duration.

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CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Sexual Harassment:

is disturbing attitudes, words, and/or behaviors that are not based on consent having a sexual nature in a visual, verbal, and behavioral sense without physical contact directly or implicitly. It can also occur among those having equal status. It may cause the survivors to suffer from confusion, perplexity, and inability to make sense. Therefore, even if the persons who think that they have been subjected to sexual harassment are not sure about the nature of the event, they can request support by reporting this situation to the relevant unit. Perpetuity is not necessary; it is sufficient that the action occurs once.

- Sexual Harassment as Petty Crime:

includes acts that do not contain threats, blackmail, or insults but lead to disturbing and undesirable environments. For example, catcalling, making sexual jokes and compliments, or using slang words.

- Sexual Harassment as Major Crime:

includes acts caused by threats, blackmail or insults, etc aiming at controlling the behavior of the person. For example, asking questions or monitoring rumors about the person's sexual life and/or gender identity, having discriminatory statements and actions regarding gender or sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Sexual Harassment with Perpetual Cycle:

While a single act is enough to be evaluated as sexual harassment, situations, where the offensive acts are continuous, is defined as a perpetual cycle of harassment. It occurs when Sexual Harassment as Petty Crime continues despite all the warnings. For example, being persistent to flirt, coercion by emotional pressure by not accepting no for an answer, stalking, to harass frequently on the phone or via electronic tools.

The behaviors in question disturb the person; challenge their existence in the environment. It is not the perpetrator's intention that determines the sexual harassment but the impact on the survivor. The only responsible person for the harassment is who is behind these behaviors.

Sexual Assault:

is an act not based on consent, where consent is not sought or is built. It is any physical act having sexual nature or violating bodily integrity. Regarding the extent of the acts, provided that it does not establish a hierarchy within the scope of approach and evaluation, different sanctions may be enforced.

- Sexual Assault as Petty Crime:

It occurs in the form of a simple violation of a person's bodily integrity. For example, hugging, touching, and fondling, depending on the characteristics of the situation.

- Sexual Assault As Major Crime:

It occurs in the form of a serious violation of a person's bodily integrity. For example, unconsented penetration and/or an attempt in that regard, oral rape, stealing.

Retaliation:

is making the life of the person exposed to this situation difficult, either implicitly or openly, for the purpose of revenge/reprisal, due to the rejection of sexual or romantic proposals and/or the way they want to complain about being harassed. Retaliation can occur in private life or in public areas. Promising privileges such as rewards, promotions, etc in case of acceptance of sexual or emotional offers can also be considered a form of consent-building. Retaliation covers the acts against anyone who seeks or has taken action to report sexual harassment and/or assault. Actions against witnesses/bystanders who want to report a case are also considered retaliation. Retaliation is considered a form of sexual harassment, and necessary safeguards are in place for those who choose to file a formal complaint against retaliation.

Visible and Implicit Forms of Hierarchy:

are the forms of emotional violence that can occur when the dynamics in between that can lead to power differences (cisgender/transgender, experience and knowledge, age, salary/status, social power within and outside the Association, dominant/responsive characters, etc.) turn into the tools of covert or explicit punishment, intimidation, humiliation, degrading, exclusion and silencing. Behaviors of sexual violence drawing its strength from Implicit or visible hierarchical positions or situations are taken into account within the scope of complaints notified to the Association or when evaluating the testimony process.

Note: The other policy documents complementary to this document herein have been entered into force to be used as internal documents.

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Association for
Struggle against
Sexual Violence