

**The role of ‘community discourse’
in combating ‘crimes of honour’:
preliminary assessment and prospects**

ABDULLAHI AHMED AN-NA`IM

My objective in this chapter is to explore ways of engaging in an internal discourse within communities as one strategy among many to combat ‘crimes of honour’, as defined below. The term ‘community discourse’ is used throughout to denote discussion of every aspect of ‘crimes of honour’ within the local communities where they occur. The means include radio and television programmes in local languages, Friday sermons and discussions at local mosques, songs, formal and informal education in school, sports and youth clubs, and women’s or other community associations. I use the term ‘discourse’ to indicate the widest possible range of activities and opportunities for discussion of all aspects of ‘crimes of honour’ within the community, at every level, public and private.

The approach in no way condones or seeks to justify these heinous crimes. Equally it makes no claim to be the primary or the most effective means of combating them. Rather, its aim is simply to explore every possibility of pre-empting such crimes to assess the options available for holding those responsible accountable for their actions. It is not enough to condemn the crimes without developing specific strategies to prevent their occurrence, and to deal with perpetrators and their supporters. If engaging in community discourse can help to prevent ‘crimes of honour’ and/or hold perpetrators accountable, as I suggest below, then those concerned with combating such practices should utilise and develop this approach.

In my view, transforming family and community attitudes towards these crimes by engaging in an internal discourse would contribute to their elimination by addressing the underlying causes, in addition to encouraging state officials and institutions to hold individual perpetrators and their

supporters accountable for their actions. I maintain that this approach is an essential component of several complementary strategies to combat 'crimes of honour'. Though it can never be sufficient in itself to either prevent these crimes or punish their perpetrators, community discourse against 'crimes of honour' can be an effective means of denying them support. This internal discourse can also play a critical role in the socialising of children into totally rejecting any proffered rationale for these crimes. At another level, community discourse helps generate and sustain the political will to allocate resources and implement policies for combating 'crimes of honour', to punish perpetrators, and to deny them any moral or material benefit from their crimes. It is also a vital component in the process of transforming the institutional culture, and setting the priorities, of policymakers, police, public prosecutors, judges, prison officials and other authorities concerned with the social consequences of these crimes.

A more fundamental rationale for the proposed approach, indeed its *raison d'être*, I would suggest, is respect for the moral autonomy of individuals and families, and the self-determination of their communities. As a matter of principle, I believe, combating 'crimes of honour' cannot mean repudiating the human dignity and rights of all concerned, including the perpetrators of these crimes and their families and communities. Unless one subscribes to the patronising and authoritarian view that people should simply be coerced into 'doing what is good for them', it is necessary to gain their cooperation and support through an internal discourse within the community around cultural norms and institutions associated with these crimes. This is not to imply that one should postpone protecting women against 'crimes of honour', as I emphasise that practical measures should be taken immediately to safeguard the physical safety of women and hold perpetrators of 'crimes of honour' legally accountable. Rather, the question is one of long-term strategy – in addition to, not instead of, all that can be done immediately.

Even if one maintains that these crimes are so serious that an exclusively coercive approach to their prevention and punishment is justified, there is still the question of who is going to enforce their prohibition, and how. Since no one is suggesting that countries where these crimes occur should be colonised by more 'enlightened' powers or taken into the 'trusteeship' of the United Nations, all preventive measures, as well as punishment and rehabilitation of offenders, must be undertaken by national and local authorities. This is unlikely to happen in the first place, and cannot be sustained over time in any case, without the consent and support of the communities themselves. After all, the same local elite and state officials who are supposed to devise and implement the necessary measures are themselves a product of the same culture and context that produce the crimes. These critical actors

are politically responsive to the same communities, even if they are not formally accountable to them in a democratic manner.

In emphasising the importance of this approach as an essential component of strategies for combating 'crimes of honour', I am not suggesting this is easy and always possible and useful, nor that all those concerned with combating these crimes should or can engage in actual community discourse. Rather, my limited objective is to argue for the critical importance of community discourse as an integral part of various strategies, and to call for a division of labour whereby some of those working to combat 'crimes of honour' do deliberately prepare for and engage in such an internal discourse within the community. In this process, I am also calling for a more realistic view of the nature and dynamics of the women's/human rights movements in the countries where these crimes occur, and their relationship to the community and the state in the present local and global context.

In what follows, I elaborate on the thesis of this chapter with particular reference to the role of the state and the relevance and implications of a human rights approach to combating honour crimes. I then identify some of the practical difficulties facing the proposed approach, and explore ways of overcoming them in order to facilitate the implementation of this approach whenever possible and useful. I draw in my discussions upon the results of a research visit to Istanbul in June 2001.

'Crimes of honour' and the state

The proposed approach is premised on the view that the state has the primary responsibility for combating 'crimes of honour'. However, it is also based on an appreciation of the fact that the state, in the final analysis, is the people who control and operate its political, legal and administrative institutions and processes. Whatever the state can or is expected to do – such as implementing administrative measures to prevent the commission of these crimes, effective investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, rehabilitation of and support for victims – is ultimately dependent on motivating and supporting officials, or pressuring them if necessary, to act accordingly. The same is true for holding them accountable for failing to take and follow up appropriate or necessary measures. For my purposes here, the question is: who is going to do that in a credible and sustainable manner, and how can it be done in practice? To address these issues, one needs to understand the basic nature of 'crimes of honour' and their context, the motivation of perpetrators and their supporters, the role of the family and community, and whatever else influences the behaviour of state officials and institutions regarding all aspects of this phenomenon.

What distinguishes 'crimes of honour' from other violent crimes is that they are usually perpetrated against women by close relatives, on the basis of allegations of sexual impropriety, in the name of protecting or upholding the 'honour' of the family. As clearly illustrated by cases from Turkey,¹ with regard to 'honour killings' the decision to kill the woman is taken in a family meeting, which also designates a young man within the family, usually a brother or cousin of the victim, to carry out the crime. By their very nature and alleged rationale, therefore, these crimes arise out of a collective deliberate decision that is to be executed in public, or at least publicised for the purported purpose to be achieved.

What does this collective, deliberate and public nature of the crime mean for the responsibility of the family and community at large? How can the prosecution and punishment of the immediate perpetrator be appropriate or sufficient where so many others are responsible for instigating or condoning the crime, and perpetuating a social and cultural system that 'demands' the offering of such human sacrifice? Other questions arising out of the nature and context of 'crimes of honour' include: whose honour is at issue, and why are women killed in the name of protecting it? Further questions are: do these crimes constitute human rights violations, and what practical difference can such a characterisation make? In other words, what distinguishes these crimes from other crimes from the human rights point of view, and what does this mean for strategies aimed at combating them?

Underlying these and related questions is concern about the limitations of an exclusively state-centric approach in this regard. That is, to affirm that the state has the legal obligation to protect the bodily integrity of potential victims, and to punish perpetrators of 'crimes of honour', whether as human rights violations or not, does not necessarily mean that the state will be willing and able to discharge this obligation. This is particularly true when state actors not only face strong and deeply entrenched cultural opposition in this regard, but are themselves sympathetic or indifferent to the moral outrage of these crimes. Another concern relates to the methods and costs/risks of state interventions in the realm of family and community. For example, is it safe to assume that state interventions at that level are going to be effective in combating 'crimes of honour'? How can one ensure that the power to take such intrusive measures will not be abused for other purposes?

Sexuality, family and community

One of the underlying questions raised by the specific nature of 'crimes of honour' is whether the family and community have a role in regulating the sexual behaviour of their members. If they do, consequent questions would

include, for instance: what factors and processes determine or affect the way that role is played in different contexts, and what methods of social control are available to the family and community, especially during periods of transition and crisis? How are such methods to be judged, by whom and for what purposes?

Regardless of one's personal views about the extent and manner of such control in any given setting or time, the fact of the matter is that families and communities have played a role in regulating the sexual behaviour of their members in every human society throughout history. While the scope and methods of this regulation vary from one community to another, and over time within the same community, arguably social life would not be possible without a degree of control over sexuality. If one accepts this premiss, the question becomes one about the scope and manner of regulation, rather than of choice between regulation and no regulation at all.

The basic and most enduring means of regulation of sexuality happens through the organisation of the family and community at the collective level, and through early socialisation of children at the individual level. Both aspects are reinforced in a variety of ways, including action by the state through the legal regulation of marriage and sexual conduct, education, and even taxation and the provision of social services. Common experience indicates not only that these processes work effectively in the vast majority of cases but also that families and communities adapt their norms and processes to changing conditions over time. It is also clear that both the effective regulation of sexuality and adaptation of its norms and processes occur in subtle, spontaneous and unconscious ways.

In this light, 'crimes of honour' are a manifestation of the failure or inadequacy of familial and communal regulation of sexuality, rather than an indication that such regulation happens in those societies and not in others. The serious problem with these crimes is that they represent a violent and discriminatory response to the failure or inadequacy of traditional mechanisms for the regulation of sexuality. In other words, these crimes should be combated as excessive and violent methods of regulation of sexuality that usually target women alone, even though men are at least as responsible for the transgression as women.

While it is imperative to challenge this state of affairs, I strongly believe that it is counterproductive to suggest that the family and community have no right to regulate sexuality at all. Even the appearance of suggesting that will undermine the credibility of any effort to combat 'crimes of honour', thereby rendering the women of communities implicated in such practices even more vulnerable to violence in the name of protecting honour than they are at present. The emphasis must therefore be on asking why violence

against women, or men for that matter, is never justified as a response to sexual impropriety, without appearing to imply that the alternative is abandoning all forms or degrees of regulation of sexuality. It is therefore wise to present opposition to 'crimes of honour' crimes explicitly in these terms to avoid any risk of undermining the effort by allowing supporters of the practice to misrepresent the position of its opponents as promoting sexual promiscuity and licence.

One of the tensions that needs to be resolved in this connection is the sense that some of those combating 'crimes of honour' may in fact hold a more liberal view of personal autonomy and sexual freedom that is unacceptable to the families and communities implicated in 'honour crimes'. Those who hold this view as a matter of principle would also totally reject the characterising of their positions as supporting sexual promiscuity and licence. Nevertheless, are those opponents of 'honour crimes' required to abandon, hide or misrepresent their own convictions, or change their personal lifestyle, in order to combat these crimes? I will return to this question and to related dilemmas and issues in the last section of this chapter.

'Crimes of honour' as human rights violations

A more liberal view of personal autonomy and sexual freedom than that accepted by the communities where 'crimes of honour' occur may be supported by current international standards of human rights. But it is also possible, in my view, to oppose these crimes as human rights violations without necessarily arguing for liberalisation of a community's approach to the regulation of sexuality as such. That is, one can object to 'crimes of honour' from a human rights point of view because they are excessively violent and discriminatory against women, without necessarily arguing that the community's view of sexual propriety is itself objectionable from a human rights perspective. Although these two positions are not mutually exclusive, I am more concerned here with the view that 'crimes of honour' can constitute human rights violations, even if one accepts the community's position on the regulation of sexuality in general. The question I wish to address at this stage is when a 'crime of honour' constitutes a human rights violation, and how useful such a characterisation is likely to be in practice.

The first point to note here is the importance of maintaining the distinction between the protection of human rights and other types of state obligations, including those in the general administration of criminal justice. The current expression of the human rights idea is intended to safeguard essential human dignity through the protection of a specific set of fundamental rights

and freedoms against violation by the state and its agents. For this objective to be realised, the number and scope of these rights must be kept to an essential minimum core of rights. Otherwise, there is the risk that these rights will not be taken seriously by states, and the already weak mechanisms for their implementation will be even less able to cope with an extensive or open-ended list of rights.

Another related reason for maintaining a clear distinction between human rights and other types of state obligations is embedded in the idea of human rights itself. Since human rights are by definition intended to protect people against excess or abuse of the powers of the state, these rights apply only to those who act on behalf of the state or under the colour of its authority or approval. Consequently, crimes like homicide are not human rights violations unless committed by agents of the state, or with their approval. This point is usually made in relation to acts of violence against women like 'crimes of honour' in terms of the distinction between the public domain of state action and the private domain of the family and community.

Some women rights advocates challenge this distinction by arguing that the state should be held accountable for its failure to act with 'due diligence' in combating violence against women within the private domain of family and community. From this perspective, the state is responsible for its failure to prosecute effectively and punish those who perpetrate violence against women in the private domain, though their crimes cannot be attributed to the state as such. While I agree with this useful strategy for pressing the state to be more proactive in protecting women against abuse by non-state actors, I do not take it to mean repudiating the distinction between the public and private domains. This is wise because once the state is allowed to act within the private domain, it will probably abuse that power to violate human rights instead of protecting them. The point here is not that state intervention can never succeed in protecting women against 'crimes of honour' or domestic violence more broadly, as that can indeed happen. Rather, the concern is about the likely abuse of the power to violate the privacy of family and community.

In the final analysis, therefore, the question is still, what does state responsibility mean in cases of 'crimes of honour' that fall within the private domain? How can the state discharge its obligation to protect women against violence within the family and community without violating the integrity of the family and community, or the economic and psychological well-being of their members? For instance, how can the family cope with the stigma of visible state interventions, and what can the state do for the young men who are pressured by their families and communities to commit 'crimes of honour' against their sisters?

Exclusive reliance on the state-centric approach is further limited in that it tends to be *reactive* to already committed violations by the action or omission of officials of the state, rather than *proactive* to pre-empt their happening in the first place. This approach can also be problematic because it tends to be slow, costly and generally inappropriate for the task at hand. In view of the severe resource limitations of developing countries that might enable state agencies and officials to provide emergency housing, employment or social security, it is more likely that women who are vulnerable to violence from members of their own families will be placed in so-called 'protective custody' to ensure their immediate physical safety. What human quality of life would women in that position have, and who is to protect them from abuse by custodial officials, and how can the state have the necessary resources for a proper implementation of such a drastic measure?

Moreover, since no enforcement system can cope with massive and persistent violations, the state-centric approach will not work unless the violation of the normative system in question ('crimes of honour' here) is the exception rather than the rule. Only then can the system achieve and sustain the necessary political will for enforcement against a more manageable number of violators, and devote the resources necessary for implementation activities in general. In other words, a proactive approach that seeks to reduce significantly the scale and frequency of 'crimes of honour' over time is necessary for the satisfactory operation of the state-centric approach by enabling it to focus on its enforcement and implementation capacity on fewer crimes. That is unlikely to happen in practice, I suggest, without the sort of community discourse proposed in this chapter.

With due regard to all the preceding remarks and reservations, it is also clear that certain aspects of 'crimes of honour' do reflect patterns of human rights violations. In the more immediate sense, the persistence of these crimes indicates a failure of the state to protect the lives and bodily integrity of women, including the provision of effective remedies against these crimes. More broadly, 'crimes of honour' signify deep-rooted, multifaceted and endemic discrimination against women, which the state is obliged to redress under Article 5 (a) of the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of 1979, even when perpetrated by non-state actors.² However, it does not necessarily follow that a human rights approach is desirable and/or viable in all situations and settings. That is, one should carefully assess the advantages and disadvantages of this approach on a case-by-case basis, rather than automatically invoking it in all situations.

Accordingly, a human rights approach is relevant to combating 'crimes of honour', as a matter of principle as well as for tactical reasons, but should only be seen as one option among others, or as an element of a broader

strategy, rather than the only possible and effective approach. Indeed, I would argue that the proposed community discourse is critical for the effective application of a human rights approach itself, as well as being necessary for supporting other strategies for combating 'crimes of honour'. In Turkey, for example, there has been significant growth in the women's/human rights movement since the 1980s. Feminist activists and NGOs have succeeded in opening shelters for battered women, research centres, and organisations that can lobby for legislative reforms and the adoption of administrative measures to protect the rights of women, with some considerable recent successes.³ It is important to acknowledge and appreciate the significant work being done by these organisations in the protection of the rights of women.⁴ The question that arose for me in Turkey is how to make these efforts more effective in achieving their objectives in rural areas where traditional patriarchal culture still dominates. What follows is about supplementing and supporting the initiatives of NGOs and others actors engaged in combating 'crimes of honour', and not displacing or discrediting them, or undermining their efforts.

Towards a 'community discourse' approach

A 'community discourse' approach is necessary, I suggest, as a means of transforming family and community attitudes about these crimes, as well as prompting and supporting state officials and institutions to combat them more effectively. For example, such an internal discourse within the community about 'crimes of honour' is critical for the early socialisation of children against cultural values that condone, even reward, 'crimes of honour', and for transforming the institutional culture and priorities of state officials concerned with various aspects of these crimes.

I also believe that including a community discourse component is required out of respect for the moral autonomy of individuals and families and the self-determination of their communities. To insist that even perpetrators of these crimes should not be denied their fundamental human rights does not in the least condone 'crimes of honour' or undermine efforts to combat them. On the contrary, failure consistently to uphold the human rights of all persons and communities constitutes a more serious risk to the essence of the principle itself. Like all principles, the concept of universal human rights is truly tested only when faced with a strong challenge, like the temptation to violate the human rights of perpetrators of violations in the name of protecting the human rights of their victims.

This principled position is supported by pragmatic reasons for respecting the moral autonomy of individuals and families and the self-determination of communities. No strategy for combating 'crimes of honour' can be

implemented in practice, and sustained over time, without the consent and cooperation of the communities in question. Trying to imagine how 'crimes of honour' might be prevented or punished through purely coercive messages will immediately reveal how futile and counterproductive such an effort would be. Where are the human and material resources going to come from, and how long can they be sustained, without broad political support within the community? As clearly illustrated by the case of Turkey, in my view, it is neither desirable nor realistic to rely exclusively on state officials and institutions to combat 'crimes of honour', because they are part of the problem.

Recalling the earlier discussion about the possibilities and limitations of a human rights approach to combating 'crimes of honour', it may be helpful to elaborate briefly on the dynamics of human rights advocacy in Islamic societies, and developing countries in general (see further An-Na'im, 2001). The basic prevailing model of human rights advocacy can be described as 'mobilising shame' against offending governments by carefully monitoring and publicising human rights violations in the hope of generating pressure on those governments to respect and protect rights. This scenario assumes that there are constituencies that are ready and able to act on the information, and with sufficient power actually to succeed in influencing the conduct of offending governments. Due the realities of oppressive governments in developing countries and civil society organisations that are either unable to confront their own government or lacking the power to influence its policies, responses to information about human rights violations in those countries have tended to come from the governments and civil society organisations of developed countries.

This situation is obviously unsatisfactory and unsustainable for several reasons. First, reliance on external pressure tends to undermine the credibility of the human rights movement itself as a form of foreign intervention, thereby enabling oppressive governments to challenge it as a form of 'cultural imperialism'. Second, such charges are likely to resonate with local constituencies because foreign governments and civil society organisations have to be selective in their response, if only because they cannot possibly address all human rights violations everywhere in the world all at once. Another reason for selective response by foreign actors is that they will naturally act according to their own sense of priority and urgency, rather than to those of victims and local communities in developing countries. Whatever its reasons or justifications, this inevitable selectivity will further erode the credibility of the human rights movement in general, as well as diminish the effectiveness of foreign interventions when and where they do occur. Third, since foreign governments and civil society organisations have to balance

their own competing interests and concerns at home and abroad, they are unlikely to mount or sustain a focus on any specific issue or place if that is deemed to be 'too costly'.

Moreover, recent developments in international relations seem to confirm these concerns about the credibility and sustainability of this model of international human rights advocacy. As the 'propaganda value' of championing human rights causes in international relations has diminished since the end of the Cold War, Western governments do not seem as willing to give such efforts sufficient priority in international relations. This diminishing interest has been compounded by a sense of deep insecurity in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, which exposed the weak commitment of Western governments to upholding human rights standards, and international legality in general, in their own domestic and foreign policies.

The mounting limitations and the general unpredictability and unreliability of the present model of international advocacy clearly indicate, in my view, the need to invest in developing and supporting local constituencies for combating 'crimes of honour', instead of relying on foreign pressure. It is also clear to me that local constituencies cannot be developed and supported without a strategic long-term engagement in internal discourse within the communities about specific concerns like 'crimes of honour', in the broader context of gender power relations within the family and community. Although there are varying degrees of such discourse, as can be seen in the case of Turkey, what is lacking is a clear strategic approach to addressing the difficulties, assessing progress and failures, devising and implementing appropriate local plans for a 'division of labour' whereby various actors assume specific roles in the process. Since community discourse is neither easy nor effectively done by all those who are engaged in combating 'crimes of honour', there is need for careful preparation for different roles, continuous evaluation of efficacy and sustainability, and so forth, for the particular problem and locale in question. How can such a strategic approach be developed and implemented?

To begin with, all those working to combat 'crimes of honour' should really accept the need for internal discourse within the communities, instead of relying on international pressure for achieving their objectives at home. Part of that necessary reorientation, I believe, is to identify clearly and address the reasons why they have not taken community discourse seriously and acted on this more strongly or effectively in the past. In general, and subject to local contextual factors, there are two apparent reasons for the lack or weakness of serious engagement in internal discourse that are particularly relevant to enhancing commitment and helpful for the preparation

process outlined below. One reason, it seems to me, is ambivalence about the appropriate scope of the human rights agenda in relation to the specific issues and/or region. As we asked earlier, for example, is the objective a narrow and specific focus on preventing and punishing 'crimes of honour', or a broader, more liberal understanding of personal autonomy and sexual freedom? The other reason appears to be an apprehension about conceding the terms of discourse about culture and rights to traditional or conservative segments of society. As I have briefly discussed elsewhere, secularised human rights advocates in Islamic societies are apparently reluctant to engage in an Islamic discourse about human rights because they worry about conceding the authority of that frame of reference while lacking sufficient knowledge of its concepts and methodology (An-Na'im, 1995). The same is probably true of a similar discourse in terms of local cultural values and institutions.

Whatever the reasons, active human rights and social justice advocates in Islamic societies, like those of other developing countries in general, tend to be educated intellectuals and professionals. It is also true, in my experience, that those active advocates tend to subscribe to values and lifestyles different to those of the communities whose rights and interests they seek to defend and promote. This is not to say, of course, that uneducated urban poor and rural populations are passive victims who have no awareness of their rights and interests. Rather, the point is that the realities of resources and power relations are such that those wider constituencies lack the ability to challenge state officials and institutions effectively for their abusive or inadequate policies or to hold them accountable for their failures to protect rights and achieve social justice. In fact, the ultimate purpose of the argument I am trying to make is to empower wider communities to mobilise whatever resources and skills are available to them in order better to protect and promote their own rights and interests. That is, the objective is to make 'elite representation' of the poor and uneducated segments of society redundant. Yet this cannot be achieved by denying the present realities of the situation.

Given these realities, in the short term at least, the question is, how can this empowerment happen in practice? Regarding the subject of this chapter, for example, how can the more active and articulate opponents of 'crimes of honour' help empower actors within local communities to combat these crimes more effectively? How can elite activists gain access to, and secure the confidence of, the families and communities where these crimes occur, in order to engage in internal discourse against 'crimes of honour'? In view of the likely differences of opinion over the role of the family and community in regulating sexuality, mentioned earlier, are elite advocates of human rights and social justice to abandon or modify their own views

and personal lifestyle, for the sake of access to and credibility among local families and communities?

This set of questions brings me to the second element in the strategic approach to community discourse, namely a 'division of labour' whereby each group of actors plays the most appropriate role in a broader strategy. The basic idea here is that opponents of 'crimes of honour' from outside the communities in question should identify and support those local 'agents of social change' who are committed to combating these crimes and already have the necessary access and credibility to engage in internal discourse about the issues. As 'insiders' to the communities in question, local agents of social change are unlikely to agree fully with other campaigners from outside those local settings on the precise scope and rationale of what these two constituencies may cooperate in achieving. The question therefore becomes one of 'negotiating' the necessary level of agreement between insiders and outsiders, while respecting remaining differences. In other words, I am calling for a process of coalition-building around the core objective of combating 'crimes of honour', and a mutually acceptable set of methods or activities, while gradually working through differences over broader issues of scope and long-term objectives.

The main point here is that both sides find common ground for collaboration, whereby each side makes its best contribution to the joint effort, without expecting or demanding full or immediate agreement on all aspects of the problem and its solution. To avoid any confusion, I am not suggesting that either side should abandon or modify their own views and action on human rights and social justice in general. Rather, it is a matter of agreement and cooperation over an agreed objective and set of activities, while keeping the right to pursue broader or different objectives in the field. However, it should also be emphasised that good faith and respect for the spirit of collaboration in such shared ventures would oblige both sides not to act in ways that undermine the shared purpose, at least without consulting and seeking an acceptable compromise over differences of opinion or strategy.

In conclusion, all aspects of this process must necessarily be understood and applied with due regard to local context and all relevant factors and consideration. Nothing I have said in this chapter should be taken as prescribing a rigid and static formula for combating 'crimes of honour' in any specific community, let alone all communities everywhere. All relevant factors must be taken into account in careful and deliberate planning for initiating and coordinating activities, testing ideas, and so forth, for community discourse as an integral part of strategies to combat 'crimes of honour', and not as a sole or even primary strategy.

Notes

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1. See the full text by An-Na'im on the project website, and see Sev'er and Yurdakul, 1999, and other sources on 'honour killings' and violence against women in Turkey listed in the Annotated Bibliography at www.soas.ac.uk/honourcrimes.
2. Article 5 of this Convention provides:

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

I will return to how the state might fulfil these obligations in relation to 'crimes of honour' in particular, in the last section of this chapter.

3. For information on the campaign to amend provisions of the Turkish Penal Code and the outcome of these activities, including with regard to the defence of 'unjust provocation', see the website of Women for Women's Human Rights, www.wwhr.org [ed.].
4. Interview with Pinar Ilkcaracan, 26 June 2001, Istanbul.

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