



Case Study

From Desperation to Safety - The Journey of M.S

Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation



Background

M.S, a woman from Kurdistan, sought support from the Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation (KMEWO) in July 2023, reporting a distressing incident of violence and abduction. The case was of high complexity and difficulty, as Kurdistan is not a recognised state and to this end it required intense effort for us to liaise with the Home Office for dealing with the case.

Her husband forcibly relocated her and their daughter to Kurdistan. After confiscating their passports, he left them without legal documents and financial support.

They were together at his parents' house in Kurdistan for a few days, however, one night after an argument at 01:00 am, the perpetrator took both M.S and her daughter to her family's house and left them there without financial support, making them even more vulnerable.

Regrettably this was not the first incident of abuse. M.S has been systematically experiencing domestic violence from 2021 when she arrived at the UK, including physical abuse during pregnancy, controlling behaviour, and financial exploitation. M.S suffered severe physical and emotional trauma, raising concerns for her and her daughter's safety and well-being. She was also threatened that she would be taken back to Kurdistan. Once the perpetrator beat her very hard and forcibly took her to the airport. There, she was begging him not to send her back, while her brother and her sister in law interfered and finally she remained in the country.

KMEWO Accompanied M.S in her Journey to Safety

M.S found herself alone and abandoned in her family's house. Her husband had taken drastic measures and left her in a vulnerable position. It was at this critical moment that she reached out to the **Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation** for assistance.

Recognising the urgency of the situation, we took immediate action and we contacted an immigration legal advisor for support. Furthermore, we reached out to **Rights of Women**, seeking advice and guidance on how to best support M.S. This marked the beginning of an intensive collaboration aimed at securing M.S's safety and the well-being of her daughter.

KMEWO's Senior VAWG Advisor contacted the British Consulate in Erbil, advising M.S to do the same and seek advice. This collaborative effort between KMEWO and the Rights of Women was essential to address the complex legal faced by M.S. The British Consulate in Erbil established a contact with the Consulate Case Manager for the Middle East in London, who sought to confirm the habitual residency of M.S's daughter through medical records and General Practitioner. Meanwhile, KMEWO's advisor insisted that survivor had to apply for a new Iraqi passport, a process that took several weeks to complete. Before turning to KMEWO, M.S had contacted the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) department in Kurdistan, but due to pressure from her husband, she had withdrawn the case. KMEWO provided the necessary support to encourage her to reopen the case and obtain a reference number.

Throughout this challenging journey, KMEWO maintained constant contact with M.S, providing emotional and practical support. Simultaneously, Rights of Women assisted M.S in obtaining a Subject Access Request from the Home Office. This proved crucial in preventing her husband from cancelling her spousal visa, as the Home Office was already informed of the case through Rights of Women. Once M.S secured her new passport, we guided her through the process of applying for a replacement Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). With the BRP in hand, KMEWO advised M.S to contact the Embassy for her daughter's Emergency Travel Document (ETD). KMEWO offered M.S a support letter to present to UK Border officials upon her arrival in the country. On the 3rd of October 2023, she and her daughter safely returned to the UK!

Soon after their return, KMEWO advised M.S to find emergency safe accommodation. However she decided to go to her brother's house instead despite the effort we made to convince her not to do so due to safety purposes. Then we supported M.S to apply for the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC), which was granted after five working days. M.S was then advised to apply for Universal Credit to help with her immediate financial needs. Working together with the Local Council

we have been trying to secure accommodation for M.S in her brother's city, ensuring that she would be close to her family, according to her wish.

Being aware of the challenges she faced and would face, we also offered M.S the opportunity for 1:1 mother tongue counselling to help her cope with the trauma. As she does not speak English, we advised her to consider attending online English Language (ESOL) classes to help her rebuild her life and regain her independence.

M.S's journey from desperation and isolation to safety, support, and hope was a milestone to the dedication and collaborative efforts of KMEWO, Rights of Women, Home Office and other local authorities. Together, they helped M.S and her daughter escape a dangerous and harming situation, demonstrating the power of advocacy, compassion and commitment to those in need.

Conclusion

M.S's case illustrates the tragic impact of domestic abuse. Her courage and the dedicated support from KMEWO and Rights of Women, ensured her safety and protected her rights.

We would like to kindly thank all the organisations and agencies involved in the case for their valuable support.

“He locked me in, I kicked the front door very hard and he was obliged to unlock it as he was scared of neighbours to call the police” The Survivor in her own words

Are you in Need of Support?

Kurdish And Middle Eastern Women's Organisation (KMEWO)

Monday-Friday: 9:00am-17:00pm

Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, London N19 3RQ

020 7263 1027

077 4885 1125

Are you in danger?

Call: 999

Or National Domestic Abuse helpline,

Freephone 24 hour: 0808 2000 247

KMEWO is not an emergency service

Referrals

[KMEWO- VAWG REFERRAL FORM | Cognito Forms](#)

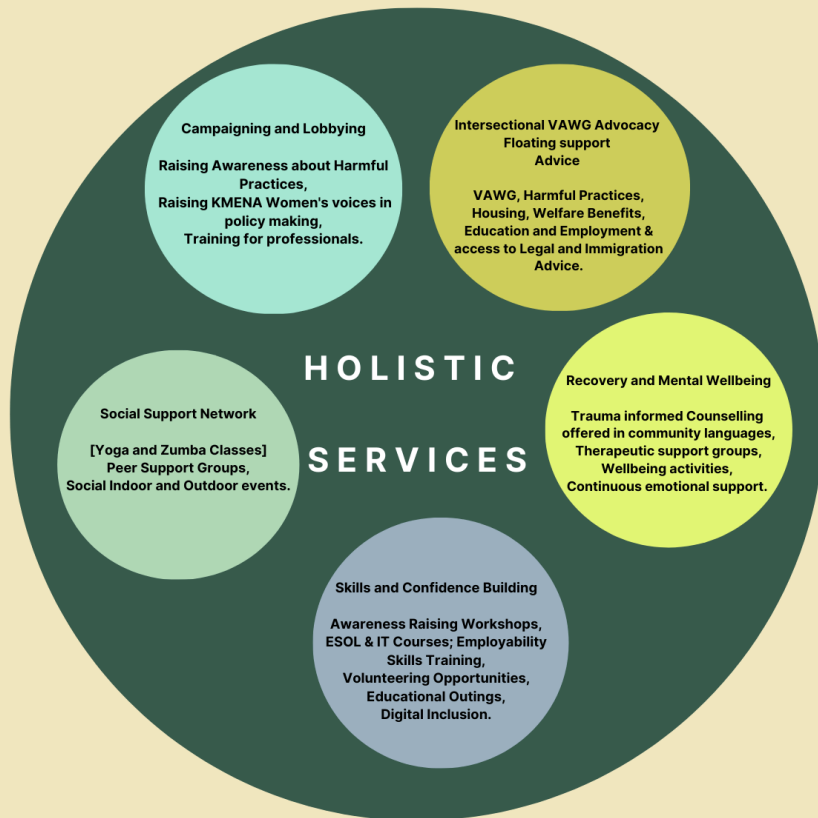
About KMEWO

[Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women Organisation](#) (KMEWO) is a led by and for Minoritised Women's organisation in London, dedicated to improving the quality of life of Kurdish, Middle Eastern, and North African women who have experienced domestic abuse and harmful practices. Our mission, grounded in equality and empowerment, began 24 years ago to champion their fundamental rights, and provide opportunities through provisions of holistic support, aiding their journey towards safety, recovery and rebuild.

We offer holistic support, provided in a safe and confidential space, including virtual and face to face services at office.

KMEWO's Holistic Services Take Women to a Journey Towards

Safety | Recovery | Rebuild



Circle of Holistic Services

The holistic services are Free and provided in women-only spaces at a safe and confidential environment.