

How Young Women in İstanbul are Fighting Back

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İstanbul is a city full of energy, culture, and opportunity, but for many women it is also a place where daily safety concerns cannot be ignored. From crowded metro stations to late-night walks home, harassment and the risk of assault are realities that shape how women move through the city. Yet these challenges have not gone unanswered. Across İstanbul, women are creating support networks, launching awareness campaigns, and building communities of resilience. Their actions show strength, unity, and a determination to reclaim safety in their own city. This article elaborates on the ways women in İstanbul, Türkiye have been battling against this pressing issue and making a change.

One of the most important ways women in İstanbul are fighting back is through community support groups and safe spaces. Organizations such as Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı provide shelter, counseling, and legal advice for women experiencing violence. These spaces are more than emergency support; they allow women to share stories, learn their rights, and begin healing in a secure environment.

Smaller, youth-focused initiatives have also appeared in schools and universities, where student groups organize workshops about respect, safety, and boundaries. These peer-led discussions help young women realize they are not alone, and that speaking up about experiences is a powerful first step toward change.

Awareness campaigns play a huge role in breaking the silence around sexual assault. In İstanbul, women have created posters, social media projects, and campus seminars that spread messages about consent, safety, and equality. Educational initiatives emphasize that harassment is not a private problem but a social one that affects everyone.

Workshops in neighborhoods and community centers often focus on practical strategies, such as recognizing warning signs, supporting friends in unsafe situations, and learning how to report incidents. These campaigns also debunk common myths, reminding young women that assault is never their fault and that clothing or behavior can never be used as excuses for harassment.

Another way women in İstanbul are responding is through **self-defense training**. Classes offered in community centers, gyms, and sometimes even universities give

young women the chance to learn simple physical techniques for protection. While the focus is never on blaming women for violence, these programs provide confidence and a sense of control in uncomfortable or dangerous situations.

Beyond physical defense, empowerment workshops also include lessons on setting boundaries, saying “no” with confidence, and practicing assertive communication. These tools help young women strengthen their presence in everyday life and reduce feelings of vulnerability.

Creative expression has become another form of resistance. Women in İstanbul use art, music, and storytelling to share their experiences and build solidarity. Exhibitions, poetry readings, and online campaigns allow survivors to express pain, healing, and resilience in ways that words alone cannot capture.

Anonymous online platforms also give young women a chance to share stories without fear of judgment. By telling their experiences through blogs, Instagram pages, or forums, women encourage others to speak up and remind survivors that they are not isolated. These shared voices form a collective narrative that challenges stigma and creates understanding.

Technology is another resource women in İstanbul are using to fight back. Helplines such as Alo 183 provide immediate support for women facing violence or harassment. With just a phone call, women can access guidance, counseling, and connections to local services.

Some apps and digital tools also allow women to alert friends or family if they feel unsafe. Anonymous reporting forms used by NGOs make it easier for survivors to document incidents without the pressure of revealing their identity. These tools increase access to help and ensure that women have multiple ways to seek safety.

Beyond organized campaigns, women in İstanbul fight back through their everyday choices. Some form travel groups to avoid walking alone at night, while others share safety tips on social media or in group chats. Many young women support each other by checking in after late journeys or walking home together. These small acts of solidarity show how powerful a community can be, even on the most ordinary days.

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