

Oral History Kosovo

Narrator: After giving birth to my son, I had big health issues, and I didn't have the support of my husband or his family. I lived with my husband and his parents.

Interviewer: Where?

Narrator: In Prishtina. After I gave birth to my son, I had continuous issues. Issues began from pregnancy but were more visible after giving birth to my son.

Interviewer: What kind of issues were they?

Narrator: Maybe not much during pregnancy. Some world, some... psychological and such, because there was no physical violence. But sometimes psychological violence hurts more than... a word hurts more than a slap. For example, I didn't have the right to make any plans with my husband, because we always had to ask his married sister, should I or should I not do it? If I ever made a plan, actually if we made a plan it always failed. So, the biggest issues were after I gave birth. I had health issues as a result of their negligence, I say it very rightfully, they didn't allow me to go to the doctor.

Interviewer: Why?

Narrator: Because allegedly, "She's just faking it, she doesn't have anything. We all gave birth, we all had pain. We all had this, we had that." And...

Interviewer: More specifically, were you depressed after giving birth?

Narrator: No, I had breast abscess, from which they told me it had become cancer. Since they didn't let me go to the doctor and get treatment, it became quite big. When I began going to the doctor, if I'm not wrong, my son was two weeks old. After my son was two weeks old, I noticed they didn't ins... not... I insisted on going to the doctor and they said, "It goes away, this happened to everyone. It will pass." And I insisted on going to my father's house. Not separate but I said, "I miss them, I want to go

there for a while.” And okay, his mother said, “Take her!” He took me to my father’s house. And the night I went to my father’s house, I fainted. Then my brother called him on the phone and told him my condition. And he said, “If you don’t come and take her to the doctor since she’s your wife and in the condition you brought her, we will take her.” He came and took me to the doctor.

When we went to the ambulance, they sent us to the hospital. And in the hospital we had the first intervention. Everything happened there without anesthesia, without anything, because the body was filled with pus. And they said, “Even if we give you anesthesia it will not make you numb.” So, all those cuts, they were all done without anesthesia. The doctor’s words, “You should have brought her earlier, not leave her in this condition. But thank God you brought her, she could have died. All your organs could have gotten infected.” After five weeks, I had to do more detailed tests, where they said, “You have breast cancer and you have to get operated on and remove the breast.” So, I was in the fourth week of treatment when we separated.

Interviewer: Fourth week of what?

Narrator: Of treatment, when we separated. I woke up in the morning and went to the doctor, he was going to stitch my wounds that were still open, open for three weeks. The stitching was also done without anesthesia and I went back to the apartment. We ate Eid lunch and everything was normal. Then my husband’s parents went to their parents to wish them a happy Eid. My family called me, my brother, they said, “We want to come and wish you a happy Eid.” Everything started here.

I told my husband that and, “Okay, fine.” And I went to my son’s room. Then her sister was an influence. When I went in, they were talking, I said, “What is happening?” “They have no reason to come here, why would they come when my parents aren’t home? You’re not the lady of the house. How dare you bring your family here when my mother isn’t here.” And things started, they started to say things to me for no reason.

I didn’t want there to be a conflict between the families. My family respected them very much and I wanted to keep that relationship always. Whatever happened, I didn’t want to tell my family my problems with my husband. I wanted them to respect him, love him the way they did.

Interviewer: Have you ever talked to anyone?

Narrator: No, never. Never. And I texted my brother, I said, “Don’t come, his parents aren’t here.” And my husband got a bit mad, “Why did you text him?” I said, “You’re not welcoming my family.” I said, “This is normal, it’s the same if they had come to the door and you had closed it, the same saying, ‘Don’t come.’” I said, “He didn’t say they would come immediately, he just said, ‘We will come.’” I said, “I don’t understand why, what’s happening? They’re not a family who come here all the time.” They’re

not a family that goes somewhere unannounced, if it were like that it would have been reasonable. But, parents are never unwelcomed.

And I said, "It's normal," I said, "But it's okay," I said, "You decide," I said, "What you do in your own home, you decide. There's nothing I can do!" And I got up and went to my room, and since I had talked back to his sister, he came to the room and a bigger conflict began. Then my brother called, I was crying, and when he called, I told him everything on the phone. When his parents came, I was too shy to come out and tell them what happened. I am a shy person. And I went there, I sat, I tried to gather the courage to tell him what happened.

At some point I knew that if I didn't tell him, my brother would call them. And I sat, I said, "Father [father-in-law]," I said, "I have to discuss something with you if I could?" I said, I told him, I said, "My family wanted to come," I said, "They didn't agree." I told him everything and as he was laying down, he got up and said, "I was against your relationship from the beginning." I respected him a lot, I can't say I loved him like my own father, because I can't love anyone like my father, but I can say that I loved him 80 percent like my father. The only person who if I heard coughing in the other room I couldn't stay sitting.

I respected him, I respected him a lot. When he said that word, I don't know, I can't say I was surprised, but he shocked me. And I said, "Why, what happened? Why are you against me? Why are you against our relationship?" I said, "It's over, but I just want to know this, I want to clarify these things to have a comfortable life, because I can see I don't have a comfortable life. What do you have against it? Why were you against it?" "No," he said, "I have nothing against you. I can see you're nice, polite, I was just against the relationship." "Why against the relationship? Do you have anything against my father?" Because he knew my father.

"God, no. I always said we're lucky to have his daughter in our home." "Then what were you against?" I said, "I don't understand." "Just," he said, "I want my son to marry someone educated and employed." "Okay," I said, "I am educated, I've finished university, I'm not working now," I said, "We got married, I became a mother, not everything can happen at the same time." To be honest, those words hurt me, his son had finished two universities but he was unemployed. I didn't understand why, why it is always the goal for the woman to work, to take care of the family, men should also do that for the family. I understand that the woman should work to support her husband, but it's not her obligation to take care of the family.

I talked to his father there, "I," he said, "never liked you." "Okay," I said, "Before we got engaged and before we had a much bigger relationship," I said, "We have met, and if the relationship is affected by your words, you should have said, 'We don't like her, she's not suitable for our home.'" I said, "I would have simply backed down." I said, "I just want to tell you this, so you don't ruin anyone else's life," I said, "Because you have stopped many things in my life with this." And then he started, he said, "Take,"

he said, "Her clothes, get her out of my house," he said, "I don't want to see her, I will find someone much better for you."

"Okay," I said, "You have decided?" I said, "Where I came from we say, this death happened and we saw each other. Now I'm saying this situation happened and I see where I belong," I said, "Or more accurately that I didn't belong in this family. And I would have never belonged here, no matter how much I would try." And I laughed, I literally laughed. And his sister said, "She's," she said, "she's not sane, she's laughing." And I got up and went to my room because I thought they were just angry and talked in vain, they didn't know what they were saying. And when I went to my room I heard his mother saying, "Everything she has, I don't even want her socks here, get them out. Immediately get them out!"

And he came and said, "Get your clothes ready, I'll take you to your father's house. I said, "Okay, you want to take me to my father's?" "Yes." "Do you have a reason to tell my father, why?" "I'll just say it isn't working." "You can't tell my father it isn't working, it worked until now. How is it not working now?" And I told them, "Can we wait until my brother goes home?" I said, "My father is alone," I said, "I don't want to, he can go prepare him a little." "No, no, let's go immediately!" "Okay," I got up and took my bag and he asked his mother, "Can we give her the baby's diapers, or not?" There was a package of diapers he had just bought. Now, should they give them to me, or not? She said, "Give them to her, she can take them."

I went to my parent's house. I went in, it was only my father and my little sister. Out of all of this, that might have been the hardest moment. When I went in, they stayed at the door, my ex-husband and his father and asked my father outside. I went inside, when he saw me with my son he opened his arms, "Who came to see me." From happiness, he hugged us. The moment he hugged me, I started crying. The moment he saw me crying he knew something happened. "What happened?" I just said... I couldn't talk. I said, "They're waiting outside." "No," he said, "I will not go out if you don't tell me what's wrong. You matter to me, it doesn't matter who's waiting outside. You're important, what happened? Calm down."

And I stopped, I tried to calm down, but my voice was trembling, I couldn't speak clearly. And I said, "Father," I said, "this is what happened, they're waiting for you outside, I can't talk more, can you go outside?" I said, "They're waking for you, they will tell you," I said, "If they tell you." "Okay." And my father got out, "Okay," he said, "calm down, I'll take your son." And my father got out, when my father got out, my uncle was saying goodbye to some guests. My father said, "What's the problem?" He said, "I brought your daughter." "I can see you brought my daughter, but why? Did you bring her for Eid or what?"

"No, it's not about Eid," said his father. "Talk to your daughter," and he doesn't tell him anything. And my father said, "Okay, I will talk to my daughter, but I will tell you one thing, I will pray to God day and

night that my daughter is to blame a little, but knowing what kind of child I have, she isn't to blame. I will pray that it's her fault and this doesn't get bigger. I will tell you, be careful because you don't know what's going to happen." Then my brother came, my mother, my sisters and I told them, I told my sister. She said, "Tell our father everything." I said, "I don't know if I can," I said, "That's why I'm talking to you," I said, "Because I know when I'm in front of our father I won't be able to speak," I said, "My voice won't come out." "Okay," she said, "Don't look at him, just say everything you have to say."

Then the next day I told my father, I sat, maybe God helped me and I talked easily, until I was done. "Okay," he said, "What about your son?" I said, "He is my son." "I understand," he said, "That he is your son, he is my grandson, but what did they say about your son?" I said, "Nothing. They just said, 'Take your son.'" He said, "Didn't they say, 'Leave your son here, you can go?'" I said, "No." "Nothing?" I said, "No." "What, didn't they hug him?" "No" I said, "Not just them, even his father didn't hug or look at him." He said, "You don't have to tell me more."

He didn't know anything about his son for two months. Even though time after time, I send him pictures. Not for any reason, but I felt sorry, I thought he would see how his son is. And when we went out after two months, we sat face to face, I was actually in front of his father. And as we were going there, I said to my father, "Father," I said, "If you think I haven't told you something, ask me." "No," he said, "If you have forgotten to tell me something, tell me," he said, "because we're human, we can forget." I said, "I don't remember that I've forgotten anything," I said, "But if they say something, I have forgotten," I said, "will tell you that I forgot." You know. "Okay." And we went to meet them, okay.

They started joking at first, "How are you, what are you doing?" Normal things, as if life is continuing normally. Then my father said, "Let's talk now, because we didn't go out to drink coffee for fun," he said, "but we went out to find a solution for a problem," he said, "which is quite big," he said, "that will cost our whole life." So he addressed his father, "Now, I have more to talk with you," he said, "not with your son, or my daughter, because they're children. No matter how old they are," he said, "they're children. My daughter for me is a child. Children are always children. So, I have to talk to you man to man. What did my daughter do to you?" "Nothing." "Has she ever offended you, or disrespect you?" He said, "No, she respected me."

"Didn't she serve you?" "No, there was no need to tell her anything because she did everything." "What, did she ever offend you?" When he asked, "Did she ever offend you?" He gave a response that knowing my father I knew he would be suspicious. I interrupted, I said, "Father [father-in-law]," I still called him Father, "Father [father-in-law], sorry to interrupt, but my father asked you a question," I said, "I would ask you to answer honestly." I said, "Because the way you answered gave my father suspicions." "What," he said, "To answer?" "My father is asking you if I ever offended you?" He said, "You're not brave enough to offend me." I laughed and said, "This answer is enough for me, and I believe my father also." My father said, "Why isn't she brave?" He said, "You can't imagine how brave she is."

I went out, my father always called me by my aunt's name, she was always very quiet and she suffered a lot. When I got engaged, I'm going back now, when I got engaged he said to him [the fiancée], "I feel sorry for her," he said, "Because she can suffer but she's patient, she doesn't express it." And he said about my aunt, "She is like Mirvet. She always endured," he said, "She suffered, didn't talk. Now," he said, "she's fine. But her body has suffered," he said, "Her life went to waste. Now her life is on point, her life is okay, but she suffered a lot." He said, "I feel sorry for my daughter too, because she doesn't talk. Talking to me is different," he said, "But she doesn't even talk to me, or anyone else. I feel sorry for her. So, please the moment you see she isn't well, you have problems with her."

And my father tells him, "I have always compared her to my sister because she is also like that," he said, "Out of my five children, if someone says anything about her I won't believe them. Not you, but my own wife," he said, "I wouldn't believe it, let alone you," he said, "Because I know what she's like." "No," he said, "I don't have any complaints either." He said, "Then why are you leaving your wife?" He said, "You know?" He said, "There are three reasons." He addressed my husband, "Did you find something you shouldn't have? "Professor," because he called him Professor, "God no," he said, "How can you say something like that?" He said, "I can let her go anywhere by herself and I'm not scared." "Did she lie to you?" "No." "Then what? Quit these childish things. Are you a child? Weren't you capable of creating a family? If you weren't ready for a family, why did you do this to my daughter? Why didn't you do this to someone else, but my daughter? What did she do to you?"

When they saw there was no solution, and everything we talked about was the way I told my father, it happened. I said, "I've always decided and my father supported me," I said, "This time, I want my father to decide and I will support him." "How," he said, "Your father will decide for us?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Where have you heard something like this?" I said, "The same way your mother decided for us to separate. "Now," I said, "my father will decide for us to get back together." And I looked at my father, he said, "She decided, not me," he said, "she is giving me that right, but it's her life, not mine. I," he said, "I can't trust you with my daughter in your house, you did this now, what about next time? Just because she was sick and you have to take her to the doctor, use treatment? Treat her, and now that she is feeling better you want to take her back? When she isn't feeling well, we will take her to her father's, when she's well, we'll take her back?"

He said, "What is the reason? In addition to that," he said, "even if she comes back, she needs two-three other months to pick herself up, she's still using treatment, she's still in therapy until she's done. Then," he said, "we can talk. Though," he said, "you have the opportunity," he said to his father, "to gather the men, and you can come to my house with them," he said, "and when men deal with this then," he said, "my daughter can come there." "No," he said, "we didn't start this with men, we will not involve them." "No," he said, "We didn't start it, but you brought it to this point," he said, "because we started off very well. We wanted to have a good relationship." And his father said, "I will never gather the men. Never," he said, "I will not gather the men." And there, "If you think you can do it," he said,

“Come, here he is.” My father said, “I can do those things easily,” he said, “But I’ve finished,” he said, “school,” he said, “I want to resolve things by words, not violence,” he said, “Because violence is first. Immediately.”

He said, “You wouldn’t have talked if I chose violence,” he said, “I wouldn’t have waited for you for two months.” He said, “But I can see that it isn’t worth talking to you anymore. The other thing,” he said, “that I’ve noticed,” he said, “We’ve been sitting here for two hours, and neither he as a father nor you as a grandfather are capable of asking how the baby is doing. Does he have enough to eat, drink? Does he have diapers? Is he laughing, crying? Is he sick, is he okay? Neither one of you asked. Don’t joke around. My grandchild is part of my daughter, part of me, he will grow up the same way my daughter did. Actually my daughter lacked some contusions, he will not lack anything. I feel sorry that my grandchild will grow up without the love of his father, he will lack this. I will give him a grandfather’s love, he will not lack grandfather’s love, but his father’s, yes.” These were the last words and we separated. He went in his direction, I went mine. He said, “The door is open if you want to come back.” But I never wanted to go back.