

Oral History Kosovo

Narrator: I remember a case, I called on the phone, a man answered, he said, "My apartment is near Hotel Sirius, behind Hotel Sirius." He explained to me where the apartment is and so, he said, "Two-three times a week, not more often." "Okay, fine." I had this thing, I've never told them I was a self-sufficient mother, I didn't want to because I feared that they respected you more if you were married. And he said, "You can come and live here," I said, "No, I live with my husband, I don't need to," I said, "I have my own apartment."

I said, "I want to help my husband, lend him a hand and work something." "Okay." And we had an agreement, I said, "Where do we meet?" "We'll meet in Prishtina and I'll take you to see the apartment." I said, "Can I know what exactly I will be doing?" "You don't have much work, clean the apartment, wash clothes," and he said, "Also" he said, "I'm a little sick from neck bones" he said, "Sometimes you have to give me a massage." I said, "Look, sir, next time you put a job advertisement, put one for a physiotherapist," I said, "Not a housekeeper." I said, "Because," I said, "I'm coming to clean," I said, "not massage you."

I said, "I'm sorry but I can only massage my husband." "But," he said, "There's not much work." I said, "Okay, it's fine, sorry I wasted your time, I don't want to waste more of your time, and you mine." "But," he said, "This is very normal." I said, "Sir, I'm not interested in continuing talking to you," I said, "I'm not interested in working either." And I hung up. And from there, I never looked for jobs online, he was looking for a housekeeper and asking for a back and neck massage. When he said that, I immediately stopped.

And when someone found me, for example, there are many women in my village who work like this, they clean. They would say, "One called me to work, can you go instead because I have a lot of work that day?" "Okay." I would go. Then I started working in a dry cleaning in Dragodan without an employment contract. They only paid me one hundred euros, I worked six days a week. I worked there for almost a year.

Interviewer: How could you afford to work there?

Narrator: Not that I could afford it, I would pay a monthly bus pass, because if I paid for it daily, my salary wouldn't suffice. I paid the monthly pass and I only worked for four hours. Then the rest of the day, I would go clean somewhere. Then after I came to Prishtina to work there, I was at work until 12:00, from 12:00, someone would call me and I would go at 12:30 - 13:00, depending how far it was and I would go there, then I would go home. This happened for a long period of time until I quit because my son would stay without me for a long time. But I quit dry cleaning because I insisted on being registered two or three times, I wanted my contribution to be recorded. But I don't know why their mind was obsessed, the idea that I'm on social welfare, which I wasn't.

I said, "I've never talked to you about social welfare," he didn't even know that I was separated. Even though I worked somewhere, I didn't tell them my personal life, I have a husband and a son, that's it. And I said, "I don't know why," I said, "Why do you have this idea in mind, I'm not on social welfare, I'm not such a case. Why would I have social welfare?" I said, "People who aren't capable of working are on social welfare, "I'm capable of working. Who said that I'm on social welfare?" "No, I don't know why I think that." "I don't know what you think. Can you register me?" Two-three times and they had the same excuses until I saw. It was October when I quit, the end of October. In the beginning of October, first or second, I said, "I will be here until the end of the month, so you're free to find someone else during this period of time. I'm leaving."