



Women living under muslim laws
النساء في ظل قوانين المسلمين
Femmes sous lois musulmanes

Transnational Solidarity Network

Women Living Under Muslim Laws stands in solidarity with women's rights and feminist groups in Turkey

The transnational solidarity network Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) is deeply concerned about the government of Turkey's unilateral withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention - the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. Turkey was the first nation to sign the Convention, in 2012. The Istanbul Convention is the world's first comprehensive and binding treaty intended to prevent and prosecute all forms of violence against women and gender-based violence including domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, forced marriages, and forced abortions and sterilizations. Its goal is to strengthen national and international policies to eliminate all forms of violence against women in the private and the public sphere and to take steps to realize gender equality. The Convention also encourages state parties to implement its provisions in cases of gender, race, sexual orientation and age-based violence and discrimination.

The presidential decree to withdraw was made in defiance of the Turkish constitution and is being challenged in the courts. It is particularly concerning that this decree was issued during a pandemic and lockdown that has left many women, children, and members of the LGBTQ+ community particularly vulnerable to violence. Numerous studies, including those conducted by UN agencies, show that domestic violence and harassment against women has increased in most parts of the world, including Turkey. Femicides are also on the rise. At a time when diverse global women's rights and feminist groups are working across borders for stronger norms, laws, and policies for gender justice and safety, the Turkish government is turning its back on essential and important measures that many had fought for in the decades prior. It is profoundly disturbing that the Convention has been the target of disinformation campaigns in and beyond Turkey in recent years, in which this seminal instrument to protect women's rights and lives has been misleadingly framed as 'threatening the family.'

WLUML is alarmed by this withdrawal and the ripple effects it will have beyond Turkey. We stand in solidarity with Turkish women's rights and feminist groups and networks and call on Turkey to reconsider this decision and to honour the country's international obligations. We also appeal to the Council of Europe to investigate the legality of Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, and call on the international community to take concrete action to persuade Turkey to reverse its decision.

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