

We speak as the Women's Platform for Equality (WPE), Turkey.

We comprise 312 women's and LGBTI+ organizations, and are supported by more than 150 other institutions and organizations. We submit the following to the attention of the public and government officials, as our collective rejoinder to the recent misleading statements, revisionist "road maps," and ongoing debates regarding the Istanbul Convention:

We give up not a single article of the Istanbul Convention!

We have repeatedly responded to the incessant arguments for Turkey to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, revise the content of the treaty to reduce its impact, and block its implementation. We have tried to convey our demands through every possible venue. We have drawn attention to the Istanbul Convention's vital importance for women and demanded its implementation through various methods, ranging from issuing press releases to launching social media campaigns. We have presented our demands to all political parties and all decision-makers. We have rallied and united women in street protests simultaneously held in different cities, towns, districts and neighborhoods.

We would like the public to know that no one from the ruling party and no government agency – including the members of the parliament and various ministries related to the issue – has been willing to meet with the representatives of the women's movement. Even the Communication Center of the Office of the President (CIMER), which claims to reply to every application it receives, is yet to respond to over 500 women's individually submitted requests for the inclusive and effective implementation of the Istanbul Convention. We testify that the frequently repeated claims about the ruling party's "willingness to consider all opinions" do not match the reality in this case.

Thus, we are compelled to repeat our position on the ongoing debates on the Convention.

Our demand is not limited to keeping the Istanbul Convention intact; we also demand the announcement of an emergency action plan for the immediate implementation of all provisions of the Convention.

We publicly declare our 5 urgent demands to be met by the government without delay, in an effort to inform the public, all political parties, all decision-makers, and everyone who wants to live in a democratic state based on the rule of law:

1. STOP RAVAGING OUR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

A fundamental criterion for democracy is the right to equal citizenship. Countries where the right to equal citizenship is denied or damaged, where women are condemned to live under male oppression and violence, and where differences among people are used as grounds for discrimination, fail to provide peace today and cannot offer hope for tomorrow. Thus, accept

the point that men and women are equal and nobody can be discriminated against. Take concrete steps to realize equal representation of women in all domains of life and to achieve equality.

2. PUT AN END TO THE TALKS AND ACTIONS THAT THREATEN OUR HARD-WON RIGHTS

Immediately put an end to all debates and deliberations on withdrawing from the Istanbul Convention, amending Law 6284 on the prevention of violence, pardoning sexual abusers of children, limiting the alimony rights of divorced women to 2-3 years, confiscating women's right to inheritance stemming from her unpaid household labor, allowing discrimination based on one's sexual orientation or gender identity, and similar policy reversals. Reinstate the Ministry of Women and create agencies to endorse and promote equality in all ministries and other state institutions. Prevent attacks on independent women's organizations and women who work on women's rights. Support organizations that promote human rights, instead of obstructing them.

3. IMPLEMENT AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN TOWARDS REALIZING OUR RIGHT TO A VIOLENCE-FREE LIFE AT HOME, AT WORK, ON THE STREET, AND IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE

Develop an emergency action plan to address physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence. Stop debating possible amendments to the Istanbul Convention and Law 6284, which aim at preventing violence. Establish an effective national network against violence – which should include the creation of a “Violence Hotline” that will work 24/7, opening at least one shelter for every 100,000 people, and forming at least one sexual violence crisis center for every 200,000 people – as soon as possible. Provide shelter, education, health care, and employment opportunities needed by battered women to restart and pursue an independent life. Do not discriminate against immigrant women and children in taking preventive and protective measures against violence that target them. Implement the Istanbul Convention and Law 6284 fully and absolutely.

4. MAKE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM EGALITARIAN, NON-DISCRIMINATORY, SCIENTIFIC, AND FREE FOR ALL

Terminate the fragmented, 4 + 4 + 4 system of education that permits withdrawing children, particularly girls, from formal education and paves the way for child marriage and child labor. Initiate an uninterrupted, 12-year long, free education system. Apply a scientific approach to develop curricula that are considerate of gender equality and based on the principles of equality, respect for human rights, and nondiscrimination.

5. IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE POLICIES TO PROVIDE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, DAYCARE, AND MECHANISMS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Immediately take measures to achieve gender equality in employment rates and representation in management both in public and private sectors. Mindful of fathers' equal childcare responsibilities and avoiding gender discrimination, ensure the establishment of free daycare centers in every workplace and in every neighborhood. Implement effective policies towards preventing violence and discrimination in workplaces.

We do not want to be subjected to repression, violence and discrimination. We deserve a life filled with peace and hope, and in which we are equal and free.

We call on all women and LGBTI+ individuals to embrace the Istanbul Convention, join the struggle, and continue to fight relentlessly until all of our five demands are fulfilled and become the regular practice, facts of our lives.

Every person who wants to enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms and pursue an equal, free and non-violent life in a democratic state based on the rule of law, should join women's struggle for rights. For the fulfillment of our 5 urgent demands, we invite the entire citizenry, all political parties, professional organizations, trade unions, associations, and mass organizations to stand by our demands and to incorporate them into their own programs and regulations.

We call on the government to stop treating our lives and our future as items of political negotiations and to start developing and implementing an emergency action plan to combat violence against women and femicide, by following the framework set by our demands.

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