

March 22, 2021

## **STATEMENT ON TURKEY'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION**

We at Global Relations Forum are saddened and deeply worried about Turkey's withdrawal from the "*The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*", otherwise known as the Istanbul Convention.

Founded on the principle of "societal gender equality", the Istanbul Convention is a human rights accord which rules that discrimination on the basis of gender and all forms of violence against women are considered human rights violations. Thus, the Convention charges its signatories with a responsibility to prevent gender-based violence, shield victims of abuse, prosecute and punish its offenders, as well as to develop comprehensive policies for societal gender equality. The Istanbul Convention is the first European treaty to define a legally-binding standard for the measures that need to be taken by governments to eliminate violence against women.

The ever-increasing number of femicides and male violence against women is Turkey's long-standing, bleeding wound. This fight should not become a political issue. According to research, the number of murdered women in the year 2020 in Turkey was 300.<sup>1</sup> Data from February 2021 shows that 28 women were murdered in a single month.<sup>2</sup> The Istanbul Convention represents a strong commitment to ensure that half of this country's citizens have a right to live without being subjected to violence. The decision to withdraw from this Convention means the legitimization of violence against women in the eyes of society, as well as the toleration of male violence.

As the first European Council member country to sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention, the Republic of Turkey had shown its determination in the fight to end violence against women. This was followed by genuine efforts by governmental and civilian organizations within the country to better implement the Convention, resulting in a number of positive steps and the widespread public embrace of the Convention. The lawfulness of this decision is highly debatable and will inevitably have an adverse effect on our international relations which is already going through a difficult period.

The decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention should be assessed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly under the principles of universal law and the procedures put forth in our Constitution and be reversed rapidly.

Respectfully,

Global Relations Forum Board of Directors

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<sup>1</sup> <http://kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/veriler/2947/kadin-cinayetlerini-durduracagiz-platformu-2020-raporu>

<sup>2</sup> <http://kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/veriler/2956/kadin-cinayetlerini-durduracagiz-platformu-subat-2021-raporu>