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Despite all the developments that we achieved as humanity women do not yet have equal rights and opportunities. Established inequalities in many cultures through practices of life makes the problem all the more difficult to solve. According to World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index for 2020 there is still an average of 31% gap between men and women in participation in economic activities, access to education and health and holding political power.

This rather unacceptable inequality is the root cause of many concrete problems that toxicate both public and private life. As the conditions are primarily designed for men, it exposes women to sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace. An average of 38% of working women experience harassment in the workplace and suffer from its trauma in mental and physical ways for the rest of their lives. Another injustice is manifest regarding the wages: A female employee is paid 16% less than a male employee for the same job.

Despite the terrible fact that men killed 339 women in Turkey in the year 2021, the legal gap and insensitivity of the judicial mechanisms continue. The studies however show that if necessary legal regulations are made, femicide rate can decrease by 25% in a short while like a year

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International Women's Day 2022

While the solution of all these problems and more can only go through legislative and political decision-making processes, the representation of women in active politics is quite low. While only 13 heads of government and 9 heads of state are women worldwide, the average is slightly higher at the ministerial level with 22%. This rather weak representation makes it further difficult for women to participate in politics and to bring their issues to the public and political agenda.

Global disasters that intensified in recent years, such as climate crisis and Covid-19 pandemic should be addressed separately regarding their effect on these issues. Because women, who work in less secure jobs and spend most of their already less earning on family members, are exposed to disproportionate disadvantages in such emergencies and their hard-won rights are put at risk. Similarly, economic problems, uncertainty driven anxiety, restrictions on mobility and lockdowns not only intensify the existing problems and but also create new ones.

The problems experienced across the world were also experienced in Turkey and had a negative impact on life to a large extent. On top of that, there was a different crisis in Turkey as well, the democracy crisis. The ruling party withdrew from Istanbul Convention, of which it was a signatory and the judiciary of the country lost its independence and impartiality with a large disregard of universal legal norms. The decisions of European Court of Human Rights, which are binding by the Constitution in the country, were given a deaf ear. Women and children who have been targeted by men in sexual, physical and verbal violence were left all the more more vulnerable.

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It is a reality of today's Turkey, where some women are detained right after giving birth just because of belonging to an opposition group. It is also a reality where a great singer like Sezen Aksu is targeted in extreme words by the president of the country. In the current democracy crisis of Turkey, the oppositional groups are collectively accused of being terrorists and women among them are threatened with rape in prisons as they are seen as trophies by the goons of the government.

The dose of torture, ill-treatment, threats and insults is increasing in the country each passing day. At the entrance to the prisons, the female prisoners and the women who came to visit them are subjected to strip search which continued on their period subjecting them to psychological trauma for the rest of their lives.

The scope and penetration of the problems faced by women require collective action with broad participation which starts with correct identification of the problems and awareness raising. Because the indifference of those who see the problems irrelevant to their persons causes them to worsen in the social sphere while the indifference of decision makers in the political field encourages the perpetrators. Two issues are particularly important when conducting awareness-raising activities: First, in order to avoid learned helplessness caused by the long existence of the problem, the public attention should not only be drawn to negative situations and inspiring success and recovery stories should be promoted well. This will facilitate placing the problem in a more solution and action-oriented framework. Another important issue in the search for solutions is the consideration of cultural sensitivities. On the one hand, care should be taken to avoid conflict with these sensitivities, yet on the other hand, it should also be taken into account that the existing injustices are largely due to these sensitivities. In this context, a socio-political negotiation with established cultural practices around the anchorage of human rights references will contribute immensely.

As the Peaceful Actions Platform, we approve the agenda of international organizations working on this issue, especially that of the United Nations, and share with the public that we will continue our activities in the light of the above information.

Women's rights are human rights!

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Peaceful Actions Platform

Joint Statement of 19 European Civil Society Organizations



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UN Women Solidarity Movement
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