

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Europe, Great Britain > Turkey > Women (Turkey) > **Turkey: “We demand that the process to ban abortion be ceased Immediately!”**

# **Turkey: “We demand that the process to ban abortion be ceased Immediately!”**

Thursday 21 June 2012, by [Petition / Sign-on Letter](#) (Date first published: 10 June 2012).

**TO THE POLICIES OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY THAT TARGET GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN’S BODIES, REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, AND SEXUALITY, OUR RESPONSE IS A RESOUNDING “NO!”**

**We demand that the process to ban abortion be ceased IMMEDIATELY!**

- Banning abortion or further limiting the duration and conditions under which it can be performed;
- Violates women’s human right to health and life!
- Violates women’s human right to make decisions about their own sexual and reproductive health and rights!

Constitutes yet another manifestation of the conservative politics that does not view women as equal individuals!

Prime Minister Erdogan’s statements in the last week of May 2012 have revealed that plans to ban abortion have been underway for some time now. Experience from the global arena illustrates that this lethal attempt, which has no scientific backing, will not reduce abortion rates; instead it will only lead to unsafe abortions and increase maternal mortality.

**ABORTION IS NOT MURDER, BUT BANNING ABORTION IS!**

**FREELY CHOSEN SAFE ABORTION IS A WOMAN’S RIGHT TO LIFE; IT CANNOT BE RESTRICTED, IT CANNOT BE BANNED!**

According to data from the World Health Organization, **tens of thousands of women across the world die every year as a result of unsafe abortions**. In Turkey, establishing the legal grounds for women to end unwanted pregnancies on demand has contributed to the decrease in maternal mortality, which dropped from 250 to 28 in every 100,000 live births from the 1970s to the mid-2000s. There is no data indicating that abortion is on the rise in Turkey; on the contrary, while 18 pregnancies out of 100 ended in abortion in 1993, this ratio was down to 10 percent in 2008. In an era where 26 countries have taken steps to remove obstacles that hinder access to abortion between 1994 and 2011, efforts to ban or restrict it in Turkey are unacceptable. Restricting the right to access safe abortion services and making them available only when required by medical conditions or instances of rape works to marginalize women’s fundamental bodily and sexual rights, and reduces the enjoyment of this right to circumstances of necessity.

We object to risking women’s rights to health and life by restricting or banning abortion instead of encouraging free, easily accessible, high quality birth control methods. Abortion is not only a freedom of choice, but a vital social right. The right to abortion that is on demand, free-of-charge, accessible, safe, and legal, is also a right to life. Forcing women to take life-threatening risks is nothing short of murder.

## **THE RIGHT TO SAFE ABORTION IS AN INDIVISIBLE PART OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR BODILY AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS!**

Women's right to sexual and reproductive health includes having control over their own bodies and access to safe abortion; limiting these rights is an open violation of fundamental human rights and women's human rights. In accordance with its domestic legislation and the international conventions it is party to, Turkey is under obligation to provide adequate, comprehensive, and accessible sexual and reproductive health services. In Turkey, child marriages, forced marriages, women's murders, rapes, and morality-based repression mechanisms have all become normalized. The responsibility for birth control has been left primarily to women. However, in a country where contraceptives are not easily accessible, withdrawal is the most prevalent form of birth control, female employment rates continue to drop and female poverty is rapidly increasing, restricting or banning women's right to on demand pregnancy termination is an act of blatant discrimination that will push women to seek unsafe abortions.

## **WE REJECT THE ATTACKS ON HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH MILITARIST AND DISCRIMINATORY DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES!**

By saying "Every abortion is an Uludere," PM Erdogan equated women's enjoyment of their bodily rights with killing people in a bombardment attack. This is a discriminatory and militarist statement that calls to question the human rights of both Kurds and women, whereas the primary responsibility of any state should be to ensure its citizens lead a decent life, and to guarantee equal rights and freedoms to all.

According to Article 16.1.e of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women-to which Turkey is a proud signatory-women have the right to "decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children." The current governmental initiative to ban abortion is simply another manifestation of the ongoing misogynist mentality that ignores women's right to make decisions on matters that concern their bodies, sees women's primary reason for existence as the continuation of the species, and constructs neoliberal population policies based on women's bodies.

**A decision to ban abortion will constitute an open violation of the right to life for millions of women, and the right to live with dignity for men, women, and children alike.**

We, the undersigned organizations, demand that the process initiated to ban abortion and the politics of the Prime Minister and the Government of Turkey that target women's bodies be ceased IMMEDIATELY!!

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**P.S.**

\* <http://saynoabortionban.com/>