

# Turkey: women, girls, children victimised by the AKP authoritarian government

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## RESISTANCE AGAINST AKP'S PATRIARCHAL ATTACK

Like every authoritarian government AKP has a special interest in suppressing women and children that gives them the opportunity to naturalise and justify its despotic and patriarchal rule. They have attempted to take back many rights of women since they came into power in 2002, like rights to abortion, divorce, equal employment and equal education. Its last attack was an attempt to legalise child rape in the name of resolving legal challenges caused by the widespread child marriage in the country. The bill prepared by the AKP and brought to the parliament last month would allow abusers or rapists go unpunished if they marry the children under 15 years old. This was a follow up to the change in the compulsory schooling system in 2012 after which many girls under 15 were taken from school by their parents and forced to marry.

Although gatherings and protests have been banned since the attempted coup in June, thousands of women protested the bill despite police brutality. This does not mean women are given more freedom or have more power than workers, Kurds or other opponents to organise, demonstrate or rebuff the attacks of the government. For example, women were not let to demonstrate at all on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. But the dramatic increase in femicide, violence and child abuse besides government's open support for perpetrators have become unbearable for the secular segments of the society, which created a huge resistance against the bill.

Some months ago when a young woman was beaten in a public bus by a fundamentalist man for wearing short pants the Prime Minister said the man should just have murmured at her instead of beating! A pregnant woman was attacked recently by another Islamist for exercising in a public park, which reminded everybody the pro-government Islamist scholar who announced on the national TV channel that it is shameless that the pregnant women go out in public.

Child abuse cases in the schools of Islamist foundations supported by the government are reflected in the press frequently, which raises the demands of secular education and closure of religious foundations. On the contrary, the government offers separate classes for girls and boys, separate public busses for women and separate spheres in public areas.

More severe attacks on women will not be surprising if we cannot create a united resistance with all progressive forces. Although there is a great anger at the neoconservative and repressive policies, we are far from establishing political channels that would challenge the continuous attacks.

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