



UK Civil Society Women's Alliance

Public Statement on the withdrawal of the Republic of Turkey from the Istanbul Convention

The UK Civil Society Women's Alliance expresses its deep concern regarding the announcement that the Republic of Turkey intends to withdraw from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence; known after its initial signing in Turkey's largest city as the Istanbul Convention.

Turkey was not only the host nation for the signing of the Convention, but the first nation to ratify it in March 2012. Turning away from this critical commitment to the rights of women and girls is in stark contrast with the spirit of the current negotiations underway as part of the 65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and coincides with global recognition of increased violence against women and girls in the year since Covid-19 necessitated lockdowns around the world.

In 2011, Turkey stood in defence of these rights, and we call for a return to this position – for the full and proper recognition of women's rights as human rights, and for the separation of populist narratives and misinformation from the genuine need to ensure that violence against women and girls is ended globally.

The UK Civil Society Women's Alliance supports the Commission on the Status of Women's regular reaffirmation of the Istanbul Convention, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women upon which it is built. These key documents have provided the framework for international law and best practice, and inspired action all over the world to better protect and empower women.

Progressive action to secure, strengthen, and safeguard the rights of women and girls all over the world is critically necessary and we urge the Republic of Turkey to reconsider its withdrawal from the Convention.

In 2021, there is the opportunity to make a genuine commitment to Building Back Better, and ensuring that women and girls are not Left Behind. The UK Civil Society Women's Alliance calls upon Turkey to make this commitment, and to return to full ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention.