



C20 - L20 - Y20 Statement

Preventing and combating violence against women and girls and domestic violence as a violation of human rights

Violence against women (VAW) remains devastatingly pervasive and alarming for women of all ages, shows new data from WHO and partners. Globally, 1 in 3 women and girls, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner – a number that has remained largely unchanged over the past decade¹. Violence is not an emergency but a structural phenomenon rooted in different societies. It should therefore be tackled in a continuous, diversified way, with prevention, contrast and remedy.

Indeed, since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, but also in the world of work have intensified and have exacerbated. As COVID-19 cases continue to strain health services, specialist women's services - such as shelters, anti-violence centres and 24-hour helplines, have reached capacity. There is a *Shadow Pandemic* growing amidst the COVID-19 crisis and we all need a global effort to stop it. More needs to be done by decision-makers to address violence against women in COVID-19 responses and prevention efforts. More needs to be done to prosecute perpetrators.

In this difficult and dangerous context for women, the Turkish Government's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention is alarming and is a serious threat to women and girls' lives. The Convention foresees legally binding standards and instruments to prevent gender-based violence, protect and provide remedy to women survivors of violence and punish perpetrators. It upholds women's fundamental human right to a life free from violence, as underlined by the Council of Europe.

The withdrawal from this Convention will set a dangerous precedent and pose a serious threat to current and future treaties promoting women's human rights.

The C20, L20 and Y20 call on the G20 Countries to prioritize addressing the prevention and redress of violence against women and domestic violence in the G20 agenda and to condemn all of the serious acts that endanger women's rights and exposes them to all forms of violence and femicide. Hence, it urges Turkey to reconsider its withdrawal and urges countries that have not ratified the Convention yet to do so immediately, to ensure a positive trajectory and avoid regression of hard-earned gains as stated by UN Women². It also urges all countries to ratify the ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.

Achieving gender equality and promoting women's equal rights are essential to prevent VAW&Girls as agreed in the 2030 Agenda. Now, we need urgent efforts in place to protect women and girls. We need commitments to change our patriarchal societies. We need a global deep-rooted gender-based awareness and understanding. We need efforts and the political will of the G20 to promote gender equality and to implement gender transformative policies, to condemn any form of violence against women and girls, to educate on non-stereotyped gender roles and discrimination against women and girls in all their diversity to eliminate harmful attitudes and practices against them, to improve equal access to opportunities, services and justice and to foster healthy and mutually respectful relationships between human beings.

In this sense, G20 Governments have the responsibility to take action to ensure women and girls' rights. No more gender-based violence now!

March, 26th 2021

¹<https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>.

²<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/3/statement-un-women-turkey-withdrawal-from-the-istanbul-convention>.