

# HOW SWEDEN CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 1325 IN TURKEY - *VIEWS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY*

The following recommendations have been developed by Operation 1325 and the Turkish women's rights platform Equality, Justice Women's Platform (SES).

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

- Although Turkey enjoys high human development, gender inequality persists, particularly in regard to economic and political participation. Women in Turkey are also subjected to legal discrimination and high levels of gender-based violence with 474 femicides reported in 2019.
- Despite Turkey's international obligations vis-a-vis Resolution 1325, women continue to be marginalized in peace processes with respect to the ongoing conflict in Syria, confrontations in the Kurdish regions as well as the recent military escalation in the Mediterranean between Greece and Turkey.
- While Turkey has a strong women's movement, recent democratic backsliding has increased push back from the Turkish state, with arrests of women activists, crack down on protests and threats to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention.
- Turkey hosts at least 4 million refugees. Women refugees in Turkey lack access to housing, face language barriers, vulnerability to sexual violence and legal obstacles to employment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS IN SHORT

- Ensure women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and management.
- Support and protect the Turkish women's movement's right to organize online and offline.
- Protect women refugees residing in Turkey.

## ENSURE WOMEN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Turkey is currently an active party to the war in Syria and engaged in confrontations in the predominantly Kurdish-populated region since the failed coup in 2016. In September 2020, military tension between Greece and Turkey has arisen due to disputed hydrocarbon exploration in the Mediterranean. In all these situations of active conflict and military escalation it is essential that women are meaningfully included in conflict prevention, resolution, and management as well as in formal peace processes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should advocate that the Turkish government recognizes the need for a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish conflict and ceases marginalizing those who call for peace.
- Sweden should advocate for the representation of women civil society groups at all high-level briefings on the EU and UN level about the military escalation between Turkey and Greece.
- Sweden should support local women's peace initiatives between Turkish and Greek women organizations, to ensure women's participation in military de-escalation.



Operation 1325 is a Swedish civil society organization working for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Founded by several Swedish women's and peace organizations in 2003, the organizations objective is to increase women's influence at all levels of peace processes and in conflict resolution.

The Equality, Justice Women's Platform (SES) is a Turkish women's rights platform that supports women and women's organizations to raise their voice more effectively in the struggle for equality and justice.

## SUPPORT AND PROTECT THE TURKISH WOMEN'S MOVEMENT'S RIGHT TO ORGANIZE ONLINE AND OFFLINE

The political climate in Turkey is becoming increasingly hostile toward civil society organizations in general and the women's movement in particular. In August 2020 at least 54 women affiliated to the women's rights movement were detained, while demonstrations organized by women's movements have systematically been cancelled by local governments. Democratic backsliding has furthermore limited freedom of press, including social media which is a key platform for the Turkish women's movement to campaign against gender-based violence and femicide.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should advocate that the UN officially condemns Turkey's arbitrary and prolonged detention of women activists, politicians, human rights defenders, journalists, and writers.
- Sweden should clearly condemn all Turkish attempts at censorship of social media and advocate that the EU issues similar statements.
- Sweden should continue to provide direct assistance to the Turkish women's movement, including access to legal aid and necessary protection measures, as well as support to draft a National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325.
- Sweden should highlight the importance of the Turkish state conducting regular official consultations with women's right advocates.

## PROTECT WOMEN REFUGEES RESIDING IN TURKEY

Turkey is home to around 4 million refugees, of which 3.7 million are from Syria. Following the EU-Turkey refugee compact, fewer refugees are able to continue their journey to Europe and are living in a legal limbo without access to fundamental resources. Women refugees are especially vulnerable and face challenges such as lack of access to housing, language barriers, vulnerability to sexual violence and legal obstacles to employment.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should provide resources for specialized services for women refugee survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and continue to provide legal assistance for women refugees.
- Sweden should advocate that refugee services in Turkey are available in an appropriate language and that women refugees are informed of their rights and where they can turn to access them.
- Sweden should support projects which bring together women from different backgrounds, including refugees, to discuss the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Turkey.
- Sweden should advocate that all future EU-Turkey refugee deals are in-line with international conventions and fully respect the rights and protection of women refugees.



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