



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt
EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo
EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme
EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo



Equality Privacy Social Rights
No Racism Peace No Torture No War
Self-Determination of Peoples Civil Rights Democracy
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

Bern/London/Düsseldorf, 8 March 2021

Women's rights are human rights – change for a feminist future

Statement of ELDH on the International Women's Day

Roughly one year into a devastating global health crisis, it became more obvious than ever how gender is an important factor when it comes to the access to human rights. In the face of the ongoing gender related injustice, ELDH celebrates the feminist struggle of lawyers and human rights activists who continue to work for a better future.

ELDH observes a worrying trend of growing anti-feminist movements, violence and discrimination against women across Europe. One in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. There are no reliable figures for trans or non-binary people, but regional studies suggest that the problem is even greater there. Intimate partner violence has risen sharply, especially during governments pandemic measures. This violence must come to an end. But instead of actually doing the necessary work to transform discriminatory structures within institutions, more and more countries decided not to ratify the Istanbul convention. The governments of Turkey and Poland even talk about denouncing the treaty they have already ratified.

In the context of the European borders, where the European Countries continue to violate human rights of migrants, they are worsening the situation of women specifically. For years, these countries and the European Union have failed to provide refugees with unconditional access to their rights and to prevent gender discrimination. These institutions operate on gendered stereotypes and depict women generally as vulnerable victims without agency. Therefore, they fail to address the urgent issues of women refugees and are unable to take effective measures to actually stop gender-based violence and discrimination.

Women refugees in particular face gender based violence as they are frequently the victims of trafficking and sexual abuse on their complex journeys, leading to a high percentage of

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mental health illness and attempted suicide. A pregnant woman who is a recognised refugee and who set fire to herself in Lesvos Refugee Camp when learning that she was refused permission to travel by plane to Germany was charged with arson by the Greek Authorities on 2 March 2021.

Hence, on 8th march, we celebrate feminist activism, historical or present, for the advancement of human rights and justice. This year we especially remember our colleague Ebru Timtik, who died on the 27th of august last year after going on a hunger strike because she wasn't guaranteed a fair trial after being sentenced to a long prison term on fabricated terrorism charges. We think of Nasrin Sotudeh, who still is imprisoned for just doing her work as a human rights lawyer. We stand with our colleagues in Poland fighting for abortion rights as well as with the health care workers and their unions striving for better working conditions not only but in particular during this unprecedented health crisis. We demand that state actors unconditionally implement their gender equality policy goals, put in place effective anti-discrimination measures especially at the European borders and ensure awareness of the gender aspects of pandemic measures.

ELDH underlines that gender justice is of utmost importance for a democratic society and an effective implementation of human rights for everyone. ELDH will continue to support the fight for gender justice, the liberation of women and for justice and equality: women's rights are human rights.