



LGBTQ as the Rights in Turkey: Past, Present and Future Conditions

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| <p>Keywords: LGBT-Q, Turkey, Sexuality, Human Rights</p> <p>DOI : https://doi.org/10.25041/plr.v4i1.3260</p> | <p><i>Sexuality is defined as one's thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions toward other people. The way a person communicates their sexual wants is what makes them human. It is possible to classify sexuality as a human right that each individual possesses, and that is immune to external interference. The lives of LGBTQ individuals continue to be focal points in the realms of social, political, and cultural discourse in many countries. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender are gender identities or sexual orientations that an individual is legally entitled to own. The recognition and protection of human rights for the LGBTQ have become a critical issue in global human rights discussions. This journal paper offers a thorough examination of Turkey's LGBTQ rights situation. The article examines the advancements made in LGBTQ rights across time through social movements, attitudes, and activism. However, it also draws attention to enduring obstacles that prevent LGBTQ people from achieving complete equality, such as prejudice, assault, and murky legal issues. To support ongoing efforts to promote inclusivity and equality for all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, this article attempts to provide insights into the intricate</i></p> |



interaction of legal, social, and cultural aspects defining LGBTQ rights in Turkey. Therefore, through this article, the author will explain the past, present, and future of LGBTQ people in Turkey.

A. Introduction

International law has regulated that all persons have the right to control and decide freely on matters related to their sexuality and to be free from violence, coercion, or discrimination in their sexual lives. This follows Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and European Convention.¹ Homosexuality and sodomy had a very long past in Turkey. The German term *Homosexualität* was coined only around 1868 by the Austro-Hungarian Author and journalist Károly Mária Kertbeny (formerly Karl-Maria Benkert). This fact raises the question of how people might have conceptualized what we now think of as homosexuality before the word existed.² After World War II, Turkey joined the New World Order and signed the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1945. Ankara signed the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms less than a decade later.³

In 2017, the new prime minister and since then president of the Republic, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, declared that supporting gay people is against national interests. This was not the first time he made this statement: he justified banning Pride in Istanbul in 2014. In 2017, in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, the authorities banned all LGBTQ-related cultural events, citing that they threaten order and that they fear provocative activity from the direction of some segments of society. According to the ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Intersex Association), Turkey is currently the second worst country in Europe in terms of LGBTQ rights. In my study, I want to present the past, present, and future of homosexuality in the Ottoman Empire and then in the Turkish state.

This research uses qualitative data methods. The research used secondary data from international conventions on sexuality rights and other literature. Analytical description is conducted to provide an explanation of sexual rights for everyone. The data used in this research was collected using the literature study method. This research aims to discover how Turkey treats LGBT-Q as a human right.

B. Discussion

1. The Past-The Ottoman Empire and the Atatürk-era

In 1914, the pioneer of homosexuality research in Germany, Magnus Hirschfeld, called Istanbul the free love nest of Europe, which received the European 'turning colony,' referring to the popular homosexual brothel of the time, the 'Oszmán Bank,' which was one of Istanbul's

¹ Eric Heinze, 2001, Sexual Orientation and International Law: A Study in the Manufacture of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity, *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 22(283), P. 298.

² What Ottoman erotica teaches us about sexual pluralism, In: <https://aeon.co/ideas/what-ottoman-erotica-teaches-us-about-sexual-pluralism> (Download: 2023. 5th January)

³ Zehra F. Kabasakal ARAT: Collisions and Crossroads, Introducing Human Rights in Turkey. Human Rights in Turkey. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. 1.

iconic pleasure houses.⁴ However, with the Europeanization processes of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century, the situation of homosexuals and transsexuals gradually worsened. Although the Penal Code introduced in 1858 with the Tanzimat reforms did not specifically penalize homosexuality, it was not permissive in this respect either. At the end of the Empire, the restructuring of important areas of society and the political system according to European models, the adoption of European political and "civilizing" concepts such as the nation, the nation-state, and civil marriage, and the continuation of this civilizational reorganization in 1923 with the new in the founded Republic, it had a rather negative effect on the lives and relationships of homosexual and transsexual persons. The establishment of the Republic of Turkey, therefore, also marked the beginning of the history of discrimination against homosexuality in Turkey. Ironically, at the same time, the first appeared in Europe the first movements aimed at ending persecution and anti-homosexuality laws appeared.⁵

Unlike many other European countries, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Republic did not make homosexuality a crime, but until the 1960s, it completely ignored lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans, and intersex people.⁶ Until the 1960s, LGBTQ people enjoyed greater freedom of self-expression compared to later years. For example, they appeared in clubs like one of the most LMTQI singers, Zeki Müren. Zeki Müren, called „türkish David Bowie,” was a Turkish singer, composer, lyricist, actor and poet. He is also referred to as the Sunbeam of Art and the Pasa. An outstanding figure in Turkish classical music. Due to his achievements in the arts, he was awarded the State Artist Award in 1991. He was the first singer in Turkey to be awarded a gold rating. He recorded hundreds of songs released on cassette and vinyl during his career. Zeki Müren never married. In the 1950s, he was constantly at the center of attention with his behavior, special outfits, and stage performances. In the early years of his career, he wore the usual clothes and hairstyle, but later, he became interested in women's clothes, got a new hairstyle, and put on make-up. He never spoke about his sexual orientation: he was occasionally linked to female performers, but according to the general opinion, he was homosexual.⁷

2. The 80's-90's Years

However, this situation worsened when a new government emerged in 1974. The Republican People's Party (CHP, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) won the elections. Still, to form a

⁴ The term is due to the German lawyer-journalist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, who between 1864-1879 defined the following in order to accept different sexual orientations: he denoted homosexual persons with the word 'urning', the community of lesbians with the word 'urinden', heterosexuals with the name 'dionings', bisexuality under the name 'uranodionism'. The root of the term was the Greek mythological figure Uranus (god of the heavens), who was both the mother and father of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. According to Ulrichs, the Urning Colony represented a kind of third-sex individuals who possessed the physical body of a man but the inner spirit of a woman. in: Liam Stack: Overlooked No More: Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Pioneering Gay Activist. 2023.06.01. New York Times. See more: Szűcs, Lászlóné Siska Katalin; Szemesi, Sándor A nemzetközi jog története Debrecen, Magyarország: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó (2006), about the changeings in Atatürk era: Siska, Katalin Folytonosság és változás. Iszlám és szekularizmus a késő Ottomán birodalomban és a fiatal Törökországban JURA 23: 1 pp. 131-139., 9 p. (2017), 133. and Szűcs, Lászlóné Siska Katalin Gondolatok a török szekularizmus gyökereiről JURA 22 : 2 pp. 333-340., 8 p. (2016), and https://www.nytimes-com.translate.googleusercontent.com/2020/07/01/obituaries/karl-heinrich-ulrichs-overlooked.html?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=hu&_x_tr_hl=hu&_x_tr_pto=nui,op,sc (Download time: 06/07/2023) Magnus Hirschfeld: The Homosexuality of Men and Women, Amherst 2000.

⁵ Dr. Szűcs Lászlóné Dr. Siska Katalin: Az alapjogok korlátai és a közérdek sajátos értékelésének gyakorlata Törökországban, Kalliópé Kiadó, Budapest, 2023, 57.

⁶ Szűcs, Lászlóné Siska Katalin A kisebbségi jogok alakulása Törökországban, különös tekintettel a Lausanne-i szerződés rendelkezéseire IUSTUM AEQUUM SALUTARE 12: 3 pp. 173-184., 12 p. (2016), and Szűcs, Lászlóné Siska Katalin Mustafa Kemal Atatürk hatása a török identitása és állampolgárság koncepciójára, különös tekintettel az alkotmányjogi szabályozásra JOG ÁLLAM POLITIKA: JOG- ÉS POLITIKATUDOMÁNYI FOLYÓÍRAT 8: 1 pp. 61-75., 15 p. (2016).

⁷ <https://turkinfo.hu/aktualis/portrek/zeki-muren-a-torok-david-bowie/>

government, it had to enter into a coalition with Islamabad's National Salvation Party (MSP, Millî Selâmet Partisi). The general political and religious climate had an immediate effect on the perception of sexual otherness. In the coalition, the MSP managed the Ministry of the Interior and was responsible for registering and supervising civil status and regional authorities. They also controlled the police, provincial administration and security, and the coast guard. LGBTQ issues and the development of administrative rules related to their situation were part of the Ministry of the Interior's powers and responsibilities, and immediately after that, it became the target of repressive politics. In the end, the coalition only lasted ten months, but it was enough to shut down the brothels and clubs on Abanoz Street. This period was characterized by massive police repression, especially against transgender sex workers.⁸

In the 1980s, the Radikal Democratic Green Party (RDB, Radikal Demokratik Birlik) supported gay rights, including the activism of a group of transgender people protesting police brutality. However, it was only in the 1990s that members of the LGBTQ community in Turkey began to organize themselves to protect their human rights. The largest LGBTQ civil rights organization in Turkey is KAOS GL. The KAOS GL, short for Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association (Turkish: *Kaos Gey ve Lezbiyen Kültürel Araştırmalar ve Dayanışma Derneği*), founded in 1994, is one of the oldest and largest LGBT rights organizations in Turkey.⁹ In 2005, the Ankara-based organization became the first Turkish LGBT organization to be legally registered as an association after the deputy governor of Ankara initially appealed their application. The organization has been publishing the journal *KAOS GL* (now a quarterly publication) since its founding.¹⁰ Another significant organization is Lambda Istanbul, a member of ILGA-Europe¹¹, founded in Istanbul in 1993.¹²

In September 2005, the Ankara government office accused KAOS GL of creating an organization against the laws and principles of morality.¹³ In 2006, Lambda Istanbul was evicted from its premises, as the landlord could not come to terms with the fact that the organization supports LGBTQ rights. In 2008, legal proceedings were initiated to close Lambda Istanbul. Although the first-instance court initially decided to terminate the association, the Turkish Constitutional Court overturned the decision on November 25, 2008. In 1993, the organizers were denied the Pride parade of the LGBTQ community.¹⁴ This was the worst event in the history of the organization. In 1995 and 1996, the Government expressed similar opposition to organizing an LGBTQ film festival and scientific conference. Government

⁸ Ezgi Tascioglu: *States of Exception: Legal Governance of Trans Women in Urban Turkey*. Keele University, Social & Legal Studies 2021, Vol. 30 (3) 384–404 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0964663920924780> (A letöltés ideje: 2023. 08. 08.) Dr. Szűcs Lászlóné Dr. Siska Katalin: *Az alapjogok korlátai és a közérdek sajátosértékelésének gyakorlata Törökországban*, Kalliópé Kiadó, Budapest, 2023, 59.

⁹ See more: Dr. Szűcs Lászlóné Dr. Siska Katalin: *Thoughts on the Special Relationship between Nationalism and Islam in Particular the Late, Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republican Era* JOURNAL ON EUROPEAN HISTORY OF LAW 8 : 1 pp. 121-129., 9 p. (2017) Scopus.

¹⁰ Sandal-Wilson, Hakan (2021). "Social Justice, Conflict, and Protest in Turkey: The Kurdish Issue and LGBTI+Activism". *Social Research: An International Quarterly*. 88 (2): 561–586. doi:10.1353/sor.2021.0025.

¹¹ ILGA-Europe was founded in 1996, when its parent organisation, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, established separate regions. "What is ILGA-Europe?" ILGA-Europe. Archived from the original on 2014-06-25. Download: 08.08.2023.

¹² <https://lambdaistanbul.org>.

¹³ Turkey Court Shows Bias, Dissolves Lambda Istanbul. Human Rights Watch, 2008.06.01. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/06/01/turkey-court-shows-bias-dissolves-lambda-istanbul> (A letöltés dátuma: 2021. 10. 06.)

¹⁴ <https://tr.boell.org/en/2022/06/21/step-step-account-istanbul-pride-rebellion-brief-history> (Download: 2023.08.31).

officials invoked confusingly interpreted legal passages citing the protection of public morals to refuse to hold these public events.¹⁵

3. The Present Dark Times

However, the wind of the European Union has also reached Turkey over the years. According to Article 12 of the Constitution, everyone is entitled to innate fundamental rights and freedoms, which are inalienable and inviolable. Fundamental rights and freedoms also include the duties and responsibilities of an individual towards society, his family, and others. Article 10 states that all individuals are equal before the law without discrimination, regardless of language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect, or any similar consideration. Men and women have equal rights. The state is obliged to ensure that this equality exists in practice. No privilege can be given to an individual, family, group, or department. State bodies and public administrative authorities respect the principle of equality before the law in all their procedures. Also, according to § 90 of the Constitution, in the case of international treaties that have been duly entered into force in the field of fundamental rights and freedoms, and in the case of different provisions of domestic provisions of the same subject, the provisions of the international treaties shall prevail. Thus, international human rights treaties ratified by the Turkish Government are stronger than Turkish law (for example, the European Convention on Human Rights).¹⁶

LGBTQ rights defenders, LGBTQ organizations, and some women's rights and human rights NGOs do not receive support from the Government. In addition, the Government does not have any programs related to the harmonization of LGBT rights, and there is no budget reserved for LGBTQ people. In LGBTQ issues, we can rely on case law, which is quite different from EU LGBT rights. In some respects, it shows a positive direction (for example, freedom of association, freedom of housing) and, in other respects, a negative one (hate crimes, freedom of expression). According to the European Commission's report dated October 14, 2009, on the progress achieved in Turkey's accession process to the European Union, the legal framework in Turkey is not properly aligned with the EU acquis. Homophobia has resulted in incidents of physical and sexual violence and abuse.¹⁷

One of the best-known legal cases is the case of Ahmet Yildiz, who was shot dead by his father in front of a cafe in 2008. He died of his injuries after being transported to the hospital. A documentary film was also made about the incomprehensible case. The film *Zenne* (Male Belly Dancer) was shot by Mehmet Binay and Caner Alper, two former friends of the physics student who was killed at the age of 26. They worked on the film for three years and were denied state funding. Still, they found sponsors from all over the world who realized how important it is to memorialize the victim of the first known "gay honor killing" in Turkey, to

¹⁵ Turkey: Update to TUR20708. E of 30 May 1995 and TUR26081. 22 January 1997 on the homosexual community, and on redress available to them following sexual assaults. Author: Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada, 1999. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad8e3c.html>, Download: 2023.08.25.

¹⁶ Szűcs, Lászlóné Siska Katalin *Az emberi jogok az arab világban* Debrecen, Magyarország: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó (2012), 164 p. and Szűcs, Lászlóné Siska Katalin *A rabszolgaság az iszlám jogban. Véget ért, vagy még mindig tart?* MISKOLCI JOGI SZEMLE: A MISKOLCI EGYETEM ÁLLAM- ÉS JOGTUDOMÁNYI KARÁNAK FOLYÓIRATA 11: 1 pp. 14-29., 16 p. (2016).

¹⁷ Nicholas Birch: Was Ahmet Yildiz the Victim of Turkey's First Gay Honor Killing? *The Independent*. London. 2011.10.22. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/was-ahmet-yildiz-the-victim-of-turkey-s-first-gay-honour-killing-871822.html> (Download: 2023.08.23.)

draw attention to the terrible phenomenon that still exists in the Muslim country, and usually for intolerance. The creators hope that their film will stir up a debate in Turkey about hate crimes stemming from prejudice. "People should tolerate each other. They should understand that different identities can coexist without disturbing each other," Binay told CNN News.

Ahmet Yildiz, who became a martyr to homophobia in Turkey, had to die because, despite his family's demands, he refused to live his life in hiding but openly accepted his identity and his relationship with a more mature man, another teddy bear. His family wanted him to deny himself, to "cure" himself of homosexuality, but Ahmet refused to choose unhappiness. Shortly before he was killed, he received several death threats, which one evening, while he was running down the street for ice cream, someone made them come true. More than three years after the cruel murder, the culprit - the father - is still on the run.¹⁸ The 2010s are starting to show the winds of change, primarily, as I already mentioned, due to the pressure of the EU. Due to EU pressure, in 2011, Öykü Evren Özen, a transgender woman candidate from the northwestern province of Bursa (CHP), became Turkey's first transgender parliamentarian.¹⁹

On September 21, 2011, the Minister of Family and Social Policy, Fatma Şahin, promised that the Government would actively cooperate with LGBTQ organizations. He submitted a proposal to ensure the rights of LGBTQ people in the new Constitution, which the Parliament planned to draft next year. He called on the members of Parliament to treat the proposal positively. He argued that *"if freedom and equality are for all, then discrimination based on sexual orientation must be abolished, and the rights of LGBTQ citizens must be recognized."*

In May 2012, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) asked the drafters of the new Turkish Constitution to recognize and include same-sex marriage in the new Constitution. The largest party in the Turkish Parliament, the AKP (Justice and Development Party, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), and one of the opposition parties, the MHP (National Movement Party, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi), rejected it. In contrast, the main opposition party, the CHP (Republican People's Party, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), supported it. On May 29, 2013, a parliamentary motion was again submitted regarding discussing LGBTQ rights in Turkey. Despite the abstentions of the pro-Kurdish BDP, the secular CHP, and the Turkish nationalist party MHP, the motion was rejected by the votes of the ruling party, AKP.

On August 12, 2013, the Constitution Preparatory Committee, consisting of four major parliamentary parties, agreed to provide constitutional protection against discrimination against LGBTQ persons. Members of the opposition parties called for the inclusion of the terms "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" in the provision ensuring equality before the law. However, the proposal was rejected due to the votes of the members of the ruling Justice and Development Party.²⁰

¹⁸ <https://hatter.hu/hirszolgalat/megfilmesitettek-a-sajat-apja-altal-becsuletbol-meggyilkolt-meleg-torok-maci-tortenetet> (Download: 2023.08.10.).

¹⁹ Transsexual Activist Candidate to Main Opposition's List for Bursa Municipal Assembly. 2013.10.12. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/transsexual-activist-candidate-to-main-oppositions-list-for-bursa-municipal-assembly-56155> (Download: 2023.06.24.).

²⁰ Human Rights Campaign, "Will Turkey's New Constitution Prohibit Discrimination Against LGBT Community?", 16 September 2013, available at: <http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/tur-key-poised-to-expand-protections-for-lgbt-community-in-new-constitution> (Download: 2023.07.11.).

On July 17, 2014, Turkey's Supreme Court ruled that referring to gays as "perverts" is hate speech.²¹ In November 2016, the Asian countries at the UN that voted to recognize the rights were Turkey, Georgia, Israel, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, East Timor and Vietnam.²² In Turkey, gay sex between consenting adults is not a crime in the civil sphere. In Turkey, the age of majority in Article 11 of the Turkish Civil Code is 18 years.²³

Examining the labor law situation, it can be concluded that, according to the European Commission's enlargement report, there are, however, many examples of discriminatory application of legislation concerning LGBTQ persons. In addition, the lack of explicit legal protections for LGBTQ people constitutes tacit legal approval of violent and discriminatory acts. There is still no law in Turkey that protects LGBTQ citizens from discrimination in employment, education, housing, health care, public accommodation, or credit management.²⁴

According to Amnesty International, high school and university students were subjected to discrimination, including pressure to leave school. In a 2011 report, Amnesty International gave examples of a wide range of this discrimination. "Nearly all members of LGBTQ communities are forced to hide their identity for fear of losing their jobs, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector. There are very few employment opportunities for transgender women, so many are forced into sex work as their only means of survival." The report notes that 33 percent of LGBTQ people surveyed reported that they were denied employment either directly or indirectly because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.²⁵

In 2017, the capital, Ankara, banned all events related to LGBTQ or LGBT rights under the pretext of ensuring peace and security because officials said such events and exhibitions could publicly turn different groups of society towards hatred and hostility. On the other hand, the media noted that the ban was introduced in connection with the continuous erosion of civil liberties for security policy purposes following the failed coup attempt in 2016. All public LGBTQ-related gatherings have been banned in Ankara. In November 2017, following the coup attempt, the Ankara governor's office indefinitely banned LGBTQ-themed public events, citing a state of emergency.²⁶

In June 2019, city leaders banned the 7th Izmir Pride, the 3rd Antalya Pride and the 27th Istanbul Pride. Homosexuality is widely taboo in Turkey, especially among families who embrace a culture of honor killings, which kill family members, typically women, who engage in sexual/moral behavior deemed inappropriate. The murder of Ahmet Yıldız, a 26-year-old gay Kurdish-Turkish man from Şanlıurfa, was the first known example of an honor killing involving a gay male victim. According to KAOS-GL, since the law does not recognize the

²¹ Constitutional Court of Turkey: Referring to Gay as Perverts is Hate Speech. LGBTI News Turkey. 2014.07.17. <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/turkish-constitutional-court-referring-gays-as-perverts-is-hate-speech> (Download: 2023.08.24.)

²² Colin Stewart: Anti LGBTI Push at U.N. falls Short. 2016.11.21. <https://76crimes.com/2016/11/21/anti-lgbti-push-at-u-n-falls-short/> (Download: 2023.08.12.)

²³ Turkish Civil Code Law, No.4721. Szöveg angolul elérhető: https://www.tusev.org.tr/usrfiles/files/Turkish_Civil_Code.pdf (Download: 2023.08.21.)

²⁴ Turkey Progress Report 2009. 2010.02.10. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2010-0025_EN.html?redirect (Download: 2023.08.16.)

²⁵ European Commission, Turkey Progress Report 2013, at p. 59 (2013).

²⁶ Turkish Capital Bans LGBT Cinema, Exhibitions. 2017.11.19. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-lgbt/turkish-capital-bans-lgbt-cinema-exhibitions-idUKKBN1DJ0BS?edition=uk> (A letöltés dátuma: 2021. 10. 04.) See more: A női jogok alakulásának áttekintése a Török Köztársaság megalakulásától napjainkig JOG ÁLLAM POLITIKA: JOG- ÉS POLITIKATUDOMÁNYI FOLYÓIRAT 2 pp. 39-54., 16 p. (2017)

existence of LGBTQ individuals, the authorities did not provide them with adequate status protection. KAOS-GL also reported that some LGBTQ people did not have access to health services or faced discrimination in this regard. They also reported that they felt it necessary to hide their identity when faced with mistreatment by health care providers (in many cases, they preferred not to seek any services at all) and noted that prejudice against HIV-positive individuals negatively affected the image of the LGBTQ community.²⁷ Dating and social networking sites that support the LGBTQ community have faced content blocking. In August 2021, a court in Ankara imposed an access ban on the social networking site Hornet and, in September, on the dating site Gabile.com. Since 2013, authorities have blocked both the Grindr dating site and app.²⁸

C. Conclusion

On March 20, 2021, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of Turkey, announced by presidential decree that the country would withdraw from the Istanbul Convention - a procedure many Turkish experts found unconstitutional. He justified the Government's decision with claims that the Istanbul Convention is being used to "normalize homosexuality" and, as such, is "incompatible with Turkey's social and family values."²⁹ On March 23, 2021, the UN rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and other UN and regional human rights experts expressed their deep regret over the decision of the President of Turkey to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention.³⁰

According to the Special Envoy, this decision "sends a dangerous message that violence against women is unimportant, with the risk of emboldening perpetrators and weakening prevention measures." The UN experts also emphasized: "The increased risk of violence against women, especially domestic violence, in connection with the restrictive measures against COVID-19, together with the number of femicides in Turkey, has increased in recent years in Turkey."³¹ The Turkish Government's withdrawal was widely criticized internationally and prompted protests by women's rights groups across the country. Turkey cannot protect LGBTQ men and women from crimes committed against them based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. Violence against LGBTQ men and women is widespread, and the state is unresponsive. We don't know what the future holds, but we must say that we hope for better things for LGBTQI people.

²⁷ Sibel Yüklér: Now, it's High Time!Kaos GL. 2020 December. <https://kaosglidernegei.org/images/library/s-imdi-tam-da-sirasi-eng.pdf> (Download: 2023. 05. 11.) and Siska, Katalin Gondolatok a török külpolitika 21. századi útkereséséről JURA 24 : 1 pp. 427-437. , 10 p. (2018).

²⁸ Hornet Removed from Turkey App Store, 2021.08.06. <https://hornet.com/contributors/support/article/hornet-removed-from-turkey-app-store> (Download: 2023.08.24.).

²⁹ Turkey Officially Leaves Treaty Protecting Women. <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-officially-leaves-treaty-protecting-women/av-58133852> (Download: 2023.07.25.)

³⁰ Banks, Martin, (22. March 2021). EU leaders and MEPs condemn Turkey's decision to withdraw from Istanbul Convention. The Parliament Magazine, s. 1-3.

³¹ Altan-Olcay, Ö, & Oder, B. E. (2. June 2021). Why Turkey's Withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention is a Global Problem. Taken from Open Democracy: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/why-turkeys-withdrawal-from-the-istanbul-convention-is-a-global-problem/> (Download: 2023.08.30.)

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