



**AMNESTY  
FEMINISTS**



**SUMMARY REVIEW  
OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

**2024**



Amnesty Feminists are a network of activists who share news, run campaigns, and take action on Human Rights abuses globally, with a specific focus on rights restricted because of gender discrimination. The network is run by a committee of volunteers.

Illustrations in this report were the work of Isabel Rickets - to whom the copyright belongs. Amnesty Feminists are deeply grateful to Izzie for the beautiful, detailed, joyful illustrations she has produced.

This report is a very short summary of key information from a much larger document. A full list of sources for the information in this, and the full report, is included in the full report itself, which can be viewed by following the QR code on the last page of this booklet.



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# USA & CANADA

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- In Canada, the 2024 Budget included \$1.5 billion to be invested into a pharmacare plan to make contraception free, allowing nine million women more affordable access to reproductive healthcare
- States continue to support abortion rights: California and Illinois expanded access to abortion care and protection for patients and providers.

## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Canadian women were paid 8.5% less than men while American women earned 16% less than their male counterparts.

- More than four in 10 Canadian women have experienced some form of intimate partner violence and one woman or girl is killed every 48 hours.
- USA overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022, giving 50 states individual powers to decide abortion laws.

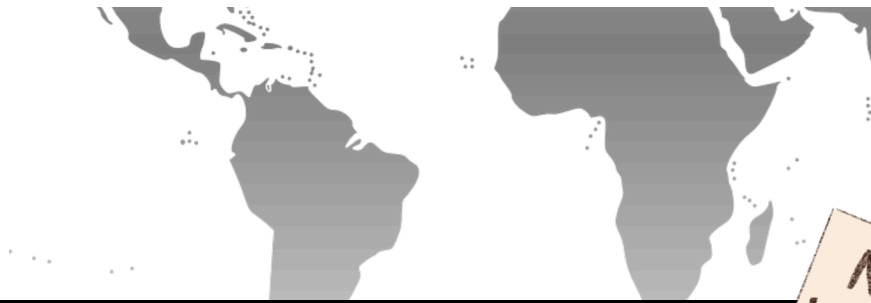


- Gender-based violence is considered an epidemic by the Canadian government, a sentiment shared by civil society and feminist organisations . More than four in 10 women have experienced some form of intimate partner violence and one woman or girl is killed every 48 hours. But, in the 2024 Federal Budget plan, no additional funding was attributed to ending GBV.

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

Eva Carney, a human rights lawyer and dual citizen of the USA and Potawatomi Nation, founded The Kwek Society in early 2018.

Kwe'k means 'women' in the Potawatomi language. They provide supplies, including pads, tampons, underwear, 'moon time' bags filled with supplies, and educational materials to indigenous students and communities across the USA, mostly through partnerships with schools.



# LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

## • POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Costa Rica (50%) and Chile (58%) have achieved parity in government.
- Mexico's Supreme Court decriminalised abortion in 2023 but it remains criminalised in 20 states.
- A case in Argentina in 2023 recognised 'obstetric violence' for the first time. It is a form of gender-based violence, exercised by those in charge of health care for pregnant persons.

## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- LAC reached its highest economic parity score to date (65.7%) in 2024



NI  
UNA  
MENOS



- In 2022 only 25% of cabinet posts in LAC countries were held by women
  - Trans women are particularly at risk in LAC and currently have an average life expectancy of around 35 years

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

Ni Una Menos (Not One More) is a grassroots Argentinian movement, born in 2015 after a series of teenage femicides. Every year on June 3rd they protest to highlight the continued struggle to eradicate GBV.

The movement's importance was highlighted in March 2023 when Maria Aquino was murdered by her former partner. Aquino spent years seeking support from the local judiciary, filing lawsuits against him and alerting authorities to threats she received. Aquino was one of 99 femicide cases reported in the first four months of 2023, 60% of which occurred in the victim's home. Despite advancements, the safety of women in Argentina remains a concern and so the work of Ni Una Menos is essential.



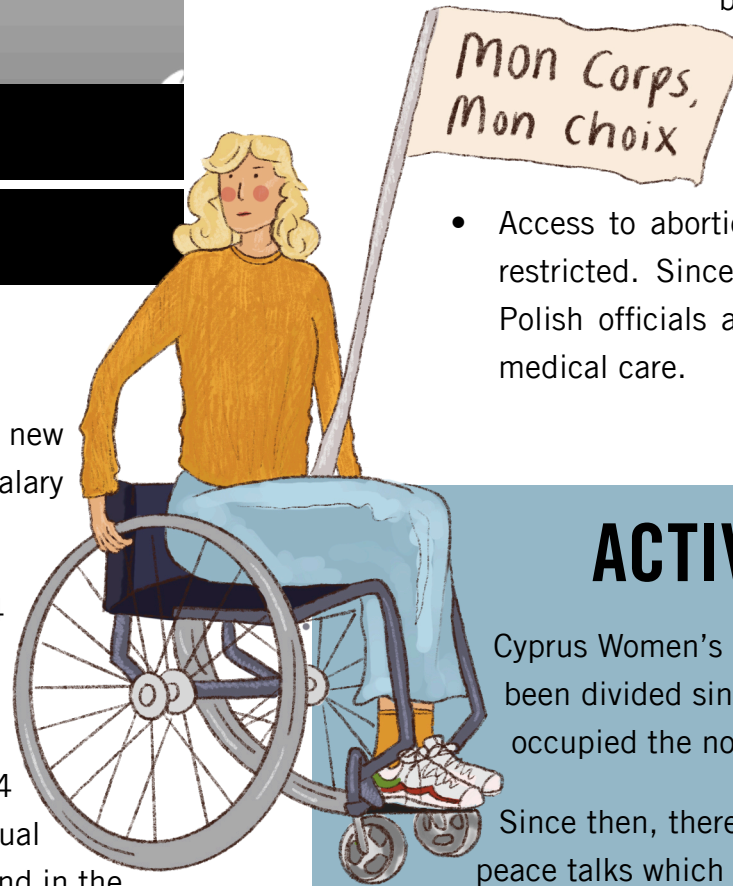
# CENTRAL, WEST & SOUTH EUROPE

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- The EU improves pay transparency through a new law that companies must share employee salary data and keep the wage gap at 5% or less.
- Sweden in 2023 and Netherlands in 2024 amended legislation and recognise a consent-based definition of rape.
- The Catalan government announced in 2024 it was providing free reusable menstrual products in one of the first initiatives of its kind in the world.

## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Women in the EU earn 13% less than men
- In 2022 an estimated 23,000 women in Europe were victims of intimate partner or family-related killings



- The wave of conservatism sweeping across Europe has resulted in increased attacks on the rights of the LGBTQI+ community. Far-right parties in Slovakia have proposed a bill that would make it impossible to change 'birth numbers', effectively blocking gender recognition for trans people.
- Access to abortions in Poland have become increasingly restricted. Since a near-ban on legal abortion in 2020, Polish officials are increasingly targeting women seeking medical care.

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

Cyprus Women's Biocommunal Coalition: Cyprus has been divided since 1974, when Turkey invaded and occupied the north of the island.

Since then, there has been several rounds of UN-led peace talks which have failed to yield results.

The CWBC works to resolve the Cyprus issue by incorporating gender perspectives, ensuring equal and meaningful participation of women in the negotiation process and strengthening the role of women in peace-building by promoting a culture of peace and reconciliation.



# EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Uzbekistan included equal pay and removed job restrictions for women in the Labor Code 2022.
- In May 2024 in Kazakhstan, following the prosecution of the country's former economy minister for the murder of his partner, 'Saltanat's Law' was passed, criminalising battery and 'light bodily harm'.
- Uzbekistan passed a law to criminalise domestic violence after years of campaigning from survivors and campaigners.

## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- A focus on 'traditional values' contributes to a deterioration of women's rights



- Amnesty International produced a report on the region in December 2022 exposing the institutional, social and cultural challenges faced by survivors of GBV and how ill-equipped state institutions are to safeguard against violence.
- It has been over two years since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The war has had a disproportionate effect on women living in the war zone who face increased burden of caring responsibilities, challenges in accessing housing, food, sexual health, employment, and other essential services.

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

Teenagers Gaukhar Abualieva and Dayana Zhumabaeva from Kazakhstan launched "Hi, ADHD" in 2024. Their mission is to raise awareness and provide support for people with ADHD and mental illnesses in Central Asia.

The non-profit works to translate resources related to ADHD and mental health from English into Kazakh and Russian, including through social media posts and lectures. They have already delivered lectures to 255 people, addressing audiences ranging from school pupils to adults. Their presentations cover ADHD symptoms, myths, life hacks, stigma, masking, and barriers in diagnosing the condition.



# NORTH AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- The Central Bank of Iraq passed recent reform ensuring discriminatory practices do not hinder the financial pursuits of women. They have effectively banned gender-based discrimination in the financial services industry, including banking, lending, and investment operations.
- Bahrain saw positive change in 2022 when it established both men and women retire at the same age and receive full pension benefit



## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Women's labour force participation in the MENA is 18%, significantly lower than men's participation of 70%.
- Israel's war on Palestine persists. Beyond the immediate threat of death and destruction, more than 540,000 women and girls in Gaza are now unable to access adequate healthcare.
- Political participation of women is low in MENA and only 18% of parliamentary positions held by women.

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

SARA RAHNAMA is an Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Program for the Study of the Middle East & North Africa at Morgan State University. She is the author of *The Future is Feminist: Women and Social Change in Interwar Algeria* (2023), which examines how commentators saw women's advancement as key to a prosperous and modern future for Algeria.

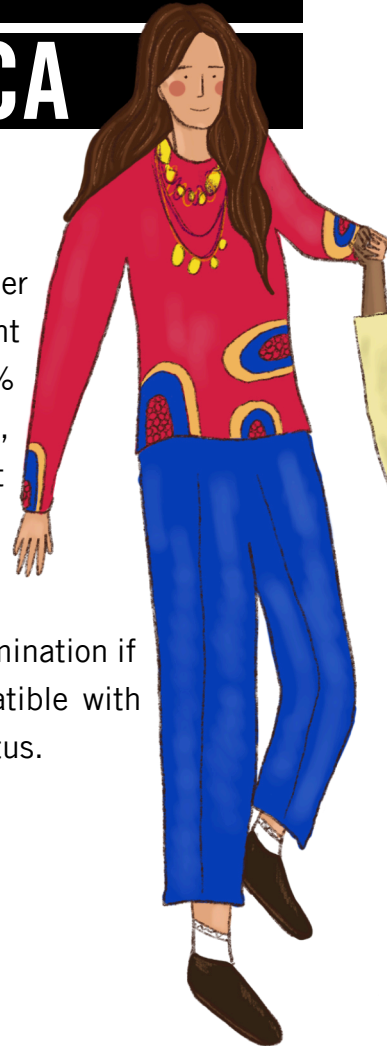
LINA ABIRAFEH: An activist, academic, and aid worker, Lina AbiRafeh is one of the world's leading women's rights experts. She has a master's degree in international economics and development from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science.



# WESTERN & CENTRAL AFRICA

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Sierra Leone passed the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act (GEWE) in 2023 which states 30% of jobs must be reserved for women, senior positions ringfenced and at least 14 weeks of maternity leave.
- Benin passed one of the most liberal abortion laws in Africa, permitting termination if a pregnancy causes distress incompatible with the interests of the woman and/or foetus.



## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Women complete secondary school at lower rates than male counterparts.
- Sierra Leone has one of the highest rates of FGM/C with an estimated 83% of girls affected and 71% cut before the age of 15.

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

### NOUS SOMMES LA SOLUTION

Women in Senegal are not entitled to land ownership, as are expected to leave their community when they marry. When Mariama Sonko moved to her new husband's town, she and a group of women convinced a landowner to rent them a small plot of land in return for part of their harvest. Five years later, once their crop was plentiful, they were kicked off the land.

Sonko identified that when women earn money, they reinvest it in their community, health and education. So, she chose to invest in women, training woman farmers who often had no access to education, explaining their rights and funding women-led agricultural projects.





# SOUTHERN AFRICA

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Botswana's 'Vision 2036 Achieving Prosperity for All' defines their aspirations to become a high-income economy. Promoting gender equality and granting men and women equal opportunities to participate in the economy are key elements
- In South Africa elective abortion is available on request up to 12 weeks and is free of charge through public health care facilities. Despite this, a high number of abortions take place outside the formal healthcare sector.

## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) in the region is estimated to be worth \$17.6 billion. Women make up

60-90% of those engaged in ICBT and often face exploitation and violence.

- Women political leaders and activists will often face harsh retribution for advocating on issues.
- In 2019 the UN ranked South Africa among the five countries with the highest rates of femicide. An average of one woman every eight hours died at the hands of her intimate partner.
- Mozambique has the fifth highest rate of child marriage in the world, Just over half of young women are first married before age 18, compared with a regional average of 36%.



## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

Zimbabwean psychologist Ncazelo Ncube-Mlilo has dedicated her career to developing local, culturally appropriate psychosocial healing practices. Her charity Phola – which means to “heal” or “cool down” in southern Africa’s Nguni languages – breaks from conventional western therapeutic techniques.



# EAST ASIA

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- China's 2023 revision to the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests included requirements to eliminate gender discrimination in hiring processes and to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Japan overhauled sex crime laws in 2023. This included broadening the definition of rape to include "non-consensual" sex; increase in statute of limitations for reporting rape; and a ban photo voyeurism..
- In 2020 Taiwan elected their first women president. Since then, a record 42% of national legislators were women, and the 2022 local elections saw political participation of women hit a record-breaking high of 56.3%.
- China's over 13 million women entrepreneurs account for 43% of all entrepreneurs in China.

## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- East Asian countries have emerged as economic and political powerhouses but, in terms of social reform, progress is slower. Women and girls are expected to carry burden of domestic and care work and their voice and participation in public life carries much less weight.
- The Chinese government is using collective punishment to target family members of activists. In 2020, activist He Fangmei was prosecuted, and despite being five months pregnant she was detained. Her family were denied custody of the children, and they were subsequently placed in psychiatric hospital or foster care.



## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

4B is a digital movement that originated in South Korea in 2019 and aims to serve as opposition to the country's patriarchal society and pro-natalist policies. It refers to bihon (marriage), bichulsan (childbirth), biyeonae (romance) and bisekseu (sexual relationships), which members refuse to engage in.



# SOUTH ASIA

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Bangladesh is one of few countries in the world to have had continuous leadership of a woman for over 30 years. Sheikh Hasina (Prime Minister since 2009) and Khaleda Zia (former Prime Minister) highlight the presence of women at the highest political levels.
- Pakistan passed the Transgender Persons Act in 2018 and it was considered a positive step for queer rights. The law protected the definition of a transgender person and access to legal self-determination.
- Asia constitutes for approximately 75% of the garment industry global workforce and is a key point of entry for women in the workplace.



## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- The Taliban's rule of Afghanistan has erased women from public life. Afghanistan now ranks last for women's rights globally and is the only country to restrict education for girls past the age of 12.
- Women in Pakistan are discouraged to vote. The impact can be seen in the 2024 election where 10 million more men than women registered to vote.
- India declined to criminalise marital rape in 2024 despite several petitions. The Supreme Court ruled there was already sufficient protection for women from sexual violence.
- Nepal was hit by several earthquakes in 2023. The prevalence of natural disasters impacts access to health and education for women and girls.

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

Zahra Joya, an Afghan journalist, created Rukshana Media in 2020 in memory of Rukhshana, a young woman stoned to death for having fled with a lover after a forced marriage. Joya runs the outlet while in exile in the UK. She focuses on stories by and about Afghan women and aims to give voice, dignity and support to the women of Afghanistan living under the Taliban.



# SOUTHEAST ASIA & OCEANIA

## POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Thailand passed the marriage equality bill in 2024 granting LGBTQI+ couples equal rights regarding marriage, child adoption, inheritance etc. They are the first country in Southeast Asia to legalize marriage for LGBTQI+ couples.
- In 2024, New Zealand reported a gender wage gap of 9.2%, while Australia had a gap of 9.9%
- A cohort of feminist groups is working to transform the landscape for disability rights in the Solomon Islands and globally. Thanks partly to their activism, in June 2023, the Solomon Islands became the 187th country to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.



## NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- 33% of women in Southeast Asia are affected by sexual violence.
- 69% of women political leaders still face barriers to leadership, with the top three challenges being a lack of financial resources, state repression, and sexism. prevalence of natural disasters impacts access to health and education for women and girls.

## ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT

Pacific Islands Feminist Alliance for Climate Justice is made up of seven organisations and draws on youth, disability and queer movements, and disaster response work. Their purpose is to shift the power between “donor” and “recipient” for Pacific Island women to determine resourcing priorities.

The alliances grants protect watersheds, document women’s traditional and ancestral knowledge, establish community planning mechanisms for climate emergencies, and build the capacity of feminist organizations to respond to the urgency of community needs in the face of increasing climate impacts.

# READ THE FULL REPORT:



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