



TERRE DES FEMMES e. V.

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Feminist Mission Statement

Our Vision

Equal, Self-determined and Free – this is still a distant goal for the majority of girls and women around the world.

TERRE DES FEMMES aims to make a life without gender-based discrimination, violence, and exploitation possible – in Germany and around the world.

This means in practice:

- Equal: before the law, in the workplace, concerning career and educational opportunities, as well as regarding their share of household chores
- Self-determined: in sexual matters and all life decisions such as relationships, marriage, motherhood, choice of profession, and participation in public life
- Free: from coercive gender roles and all forms of violence

The social reality

Around the world, female persons are still restricted in their personhood in the following ways:

- in their freedom through religious and cultural norms, taboos, and behavior and clothing restrictions (e.g. the requirement to wear a burka)
- in their development through denied or substandard education, disadvantages in the workplace, and inescapable poverty
- in their mind through the promotion of immaturity and self-debasement, as well as through the imposition of a stereotypical image of femininity
- in their dignity through representation in the media, in advertising, and in pornography
- in their bodily integrity through the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), which occurs thousands of times a day in large parts of the world

Every day female persons are victims of gender-specific forms of violence around the world – in war, in the family, in the public sphere: raped, abused, forced into prostitution, forced to marry, murdered for the atonement of “infringed family honour” or because of a lacking dowry.

In many parts of the world due to the supposed inherent inferiority of females, systematic abortion prevents female persons from even being born.

Our mission

TERRE DES FEMMES is dedicated to fighting all violations of human rights that girls and women endure all over the world just because they are female. This is our mission. “Feminism” means for us: all sexes and genders are equal – no exception. A person’s value is not determined by their sex/gender. A person is not limited to a predetermined position in the family or society due to alleged abilities or deficiencies of their gender. In patriarchy, sexist prejudices hurt men

as well as women, but these prejudices are systemically used as a justification for violence against women and as a tool of oppression of women. We aim to overcome these patriarchal structures wherever they appear. Successful integration provides protection and opportunities.

We therefore reject all forms of cultural relativism: misogynistic traditions of minorities that refer to cultural or religious roots are also intolerable. Human rights apply without limitations.

Our goals and our approach are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence of 2011 (Istanbul-Convention, ratified by Germany only recently in June 2018). We see ourselves as rooted in the tradition of the international feminist movement and we seek continuous progress and solidarity.

Our commitment

TERRE DES FEMMES is politically independent, strictly secular, and we take an unequivocal stand for the rights of girls and women. In our work, we rely on international networking, comprehensive information, targeted activities and awareness-raising campaigns, and we support a certain number of projects abroad. Our main topics are:

- Female genital mutilation
- Domestic and sexual violence
- Trafficking in women and prostitution
- Honour crimes and forced marriage
- Exploitation of female workers
- Integration and gender equality

Achievements in Germany so far:

- Recognition of rape in marriage as criminal offence (1997)
- New Protection against violence act (2002)
- Recognition of gender-specific persecution as a reason for asylum (2005)
- New law fighting forced marriage and better protection of victims of forced marriage (2011)
- Female genital mutilation as a new specific criminal offence (2013)
- Reform of of the criminal code regarding sexual offenses "No means No" (2016)
- New law against child marriage that increases the minimum legal age to marry to 18 years without exception (2017) – the result of several years of advocacy work by TDF

TERRE DES FEMMES is a non-profit organisation and is primarily funded through membership fees and donations as well as project grants from public authorities and foundations. We handle these responsibly and sustainably.

Much has been achieved – much more still needs to be done.

Berlin, June 2014

Updated October 2017