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**Argentina**

# **Banning abortion is violence against women**

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**This statement by Ni Una Menos (not one woman less) was issued on 4 June on the occasion of major demonstrations in Argentina calling for a liberalization of the law on abortion ahead of the debate scheduled to open on 13 June. On 14 June 2018 the Chamber of Deputies voted by a narrow margin to legalize abortion in the first fourteen weeks of pregnancy. [1]** This great victory is the result of years of mobilization by women in Argentina. It has to be confirmed by a vote in the Senate and approval by the president. The statement was translated and abridged for publication for [socialistworker.org](http://socialistworker.org).

IN 2015, the sound of our footsteps and the power of our voices echoed from one end of the country to the other. We began a revolution. One million people in Argentina raised a cry: Stop killing us! Not one more! We want to live! The earthquake continues. Today, for the fourth time, cis and trans women, lesbians, bisexuals and transvestites are all here together, and in every province across Argentina at once, they cry out for an end to violence against women and femicide: Not one more!

We are a powerful movement, diverse and heterogeneous, one that knows how to expose how every act of violence perpetrated against us is born from the violence perpetrated by states and governments each time they exploit our bodies, each time they disregard our human rights, each time they enforce neoliberal and capitalist economic formulas that produce more hunger and brutality.

We are not victims. We are rising up with the power of a collective dance. Our feminism is based on international struggles across Latin America and beyond, like the raised fists of Ireland that conquered the right to abortion. States and governments owe us a debt that we've come to collect. We are organizing and rebelling in every corner of the planet.

There are many more of us than those here today. We are the heirs of the mothers and grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo (who demanded the return of their children disappeared by the dictatorship). We are the people's champions. We come from the poorest neighborhoods. We are trans, lesbian, bisexual, non-binary, transvestite, Indigenous, African, migrant and HIV+ women. We are each of the activists who initiated the 2005 National Campaign for Safe, Free and Legal Abortion. We are the ones who refuse to let you victimize us, and we affirm our right to pleasure, to decide our own destinies, to dispose of our own time, to neither be exploited nor obligated to fulfill desires that are not our own.

We stand in opposition to President Mauricio Macri's government, the conservative Cambiemos party, the governors and bosses, and the dominant, elite, white, misogynist, heteronormative, racist, macho, patriarchal, neoliberal, capitalist justice system that serves only the interests of the rich and powerful. Today we come to this plaza outside of Congress to state that we will not be disciplined any more. We do not accept that the state and its authority was created owners of our bodies. We do not accept that they can tell us how, when, where and with whom we may live, with whom we may partner and with whom we may have sex.

We are here to tell them we are making history! We are alive and we are taking responsibility for those who have come before us. We are organizing ourselves to demonstrate to those who will join us tomorrow that, together, we can overthrow the patriarchy and capitalism. And to say no to illegitimate, international financial agreements that only bury us in debt. We know we will pay these unjust debts with our very lives. And we are here to say once again Yes to control over our own bodies and Yes to legal, safe, and free abortion.

**No to Macri's agreement with the IMF!**

**Not one more!**

**We want to live!**

**The state is to blame!**

# **Point 1: Sin #AbortoLegal, No Hay #NiUnaMenos Without Legal Abortion, No End to Violence Against Women**

Pass the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion bill, and nothing less! We want abortion legalized now! Based on our strength and our mobilization, we insist that Congress take up the right to legal, safe and free abortion. And we will hold our green banners high to demand that Congress approves the Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy bill authored by the Campaign for Legal, Safe and Free Abortion. We reject any bill that seeks to muddy the waters by proposing merely "decriminalization" — we demand legalization!

We don't want any church interfering with our bodies. We reject so-called religious conscience as an excuse for denying us our rights. We demand the separation of church and state and the end of state subsidies for the Catholic Church and religious schools, which this year totals more than 32 billion pesos (\$1.2 billion). Our demands are comprehensive: Sex education so we can decide, contraception so we don't get pregnant, legal abortion so we don't die.

We demand that the legalization of abortion ensures access, and that it will be covered by guaranteed health care plans for all private and public hospitals. And that this include high-quality Misoprostol manufactured by the state that is authorized for gynecological-obstetric use in order to end the private monopoly on that drug that has today led to exorbitant prices. And that we be guaranteed access to it, that it be distributed at no cost through the public health system, and that it be sold at affordable prices in pharmacies.

Enough with forcing victims of rape carrying their pregnancy to term! For the immediate, nationwide application of the National Procedures for Comprehensive Treatment for Persons who have the Legal Right to Terminate a Pregnancy. We demand a budget that guarantees that legal abortion be available in every hospital in the country.

We demand funding for sexual education and sexual health and responsible pregnancy programs, as well as the regulation and implementation for comprehensive sexual education. We want comprehensive, civil and gender-sensitive sexual education in all levels of schools and in every province in the country. Get the church out of education!

We denounce the state's hypocrisy that forces us to seek back-alley abortions. These often put our lives at risk because they are conducted under the same miserable and precarious living conditions in which we are forced to live. We demand the right to access to economic conditions and health care that will allow us to decide whether we wish to be mothers.

We repudiate any government that prohibits abortion anywhere in Latin America, and, in particular, we single out the

governments of El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, Surinam and the Dominican Republic for criminalizing abortion. We demand these countries, and the entire world, recognize our right to control our own bodies. We have the right to be mothers, but motherhood must be a choice, not an imposition. We hope that winning legal abortion in Argentina will serve as a jumping-off point for a movement that spreads across all of Latin America. Not one more death from unsafe abortions! Respect our decision if we don't want to give birth!

## **Point 2: No to Macri's Agreement with the IMF**

No to paying the foreign debt. Down with Macri's structural adjustment policies. No more layoffs, firings and repression. We reject the Macri government's decision to conclude a pact with the IMF that means hunger for our people. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement means cutbacks, layoffs, poverty and precarity for the entire working class and all trans, lesbian, bisexual, non-binary, transvestite, Indigenous, African, migrant, poor and HIV+ women. We denounce the IMF's directives, such as cuts to the already meager budget for health and education, sectors that are historically dominated by women. We also demand the end of new retirement regulations. Down with the retirement reforms!

Down with Macri's so-called Universal Health Coverage program (CUS) and the Southern Hospital Project (that will cut hundreds of beds), both are efforts to privatize the public health system. We say no to Macri's plan to reduce enrollment in teachers' colleges by concentrating instruction in one centralized university (UNICABA), we stand in solidarity with students enrolled in outsourced educational programs.

We are against Macri and the provincial governors' neoliberal program. Their program slices away at us, renders us precarious, and tries to weaken us. But we are united, and we will join in the struggle of workers in Subte, in Telam, in Radio Plata; and we will stand with teachers, employees at the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) retirees, and Line 144 transit workers, etc. We support each and every struggle against a wage ceiling that the government intends to impose with the complicit silence of the trade union bureaucracy. We also reject productivity and absenteeism clauses that result in pay cuts, above all for women workers. And we reject the persecution of activism by the trade union bureaucracy as well as the national and provincial governments.

Flowing from this political position, we demand a general strike now! As we have said during every strike, every International Women's Day on March: We strike, and we will keep striking!

We reject all forms of workplace violence against women, trans people, lesbians, bisexuals, non-binary people, transvestites, indigenous people, those of African descent, migrants, people who live in the poorest neighborhoods and women with HIV. Why? Because women suffer attacks on their rights, their salaries and face threats of unemployment through the discipline of workplace productivity. Because women's unemployment is 2 percent higher than men's. Because the salary gap between men and women is, on average, 27 percent, while in the informal sector this increases to 40 percent. We demand equal access and conditions for all categories of workers that are on par with their male counterparts. End labor discrimination. We demand comprehensive rights for female workers.

We say again that migration is not a crime! Not one more migrant death! We demand the annulment of the emergency decree of July 2017 that targets immigrants from certain African and Middle Eastern countries (as well as poor immigrants from Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru) and the elimination of the Migrant Detention Center. We condemn the violent clearing of Indigenous community and peasant lands.

We are against oil and mineral extractivism and an addiction to agricultural pesticides that poison and kill us. We are

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against racism, discrimination and xenophobia toward Black women, African women, Afro-Indigenous women and all Afro-Argentinian women, whom slave laws forced to participate in the growth of the capitalist system that we confront today. We demand reparations for the historical debt owed to us.

Women living with HIV demand new HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and hepatitis laws. No more budget cuts for prevention, prophylactics, medication and treatment. HIV doesn't kill, but stigma and discrimination do. End attacks on reproductive freedom and genealogical and obstetrician violence. More than 40,000 women end up in the hospital each year because of unsafe abortions! We are out of time!

End repression. We demand reversing legal prosecutions against, and liberty for, all trans political prisoners. Freedom for Milagro Sala (who has been imprisoned since January 2016) and all the imprisoned comrades from the Tupac Amaru Neighborhood Association.

We reject interference by the armed forces in domestic security, who only want to pave the way to repressing social protest. Santiago Maldonado and Rafael Nahuel [victims of state violence while defending the Mapuche community] are with us! We reject Macri's attempt to reform the penal code to incarcerate political organizers.

We stand beside the Buenos Aires Subte transit workers who were severely repressed for defending their salaries. We oppose the political dismissals of subway union delegates and the violence suffered by all women comrades repressed, beaten and incarcerated by the city police. End trigger-happy incursions in poor and working-class neighborhoods. No more repression in the villages, illegal search and seizures and detentions like those of Iván and Ezequiel, comrades from the Powerful Woman collective (La Poderosa), who were tortured by police.

We demand repeal of the anti-terrorist law as well as all repressive laws and regulations.

We demand the dismantling of human trafficking networks and the repressive state forces and their accomplices. We condemn pimps outright. We want public policies created to supplement the trafficking law and procedures to ensure legal protections for victims and their families. We denounce the closure of victims' shelters. End repression, persecution, abuse and police extortion of sex workers and those engaged in prostitution.

We denounce the genocidal invasion by the state of indigenous lands. No more criminalizing and prosecuting us for demanding the return of ancestral lands. We demand an end to institutional violence against indigenous fighters. We reject the extractivist model that only brings benefits to the multinationals and the governments complicit in the clearing of peoples. We want a nation of many nations!

**Point 3: #NiUnaMenos, #NotOneLess  
End femicide and transvesticide, Hate toward  
women, lesbians, transvestites, bisexuals  
and trans people's murder. Misogyny is  
fascism.**

We denounce all forms of sexist violence. While a woman is killed every 30 hours, Macri and his ally Fabiana TÃ±ez [the director of the Nationalist Institute of Women] have held up the proposal for the National Women's Institute, allocating what amounts to a mere 8 pesos to investigate each crime against women. We demand a budget to implement Law No. 26485 pertaining to eradicating violence against women. We demand shelter for the victims of

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violence and adequate psychological and legal protections. We demand genuine and well-compensated work for the victims of violence and their children.

We accuse the judiciary of the Argentine Republic of reinforcing patriarchy. Judicial power is misogynist, racist, lesbian-hating and trans-hating. It makes us invisible, discriminates against us and subjects us to re-victimization. We demand that the state immediately remove and dismiss all judges, accountants and judicial workers who exercise institutionalized gender violence.

In confronting violence, more draconian legal penalties do not stop misogynist crimes. This is merely punitive demagoguery designed to appease public opinion. We will not let you invoke our names in pursuit of increased criminal sentencing. The call for more prisons does not help solve the fundamental problem. We declare solidarity with women prisoners because we understand that the system doubly oppresses them: it stigmatizes them for being imprisoned and for being women.

We state emphatically that compulsory hetero-cis-sexuality is violence! It is time to stop homosexual-lesbian-bi-trans hate. We ask for implementation of the gender identity law "this means real access to the right to comprehensive health care, speedy clerical corrections for legal identities and respect for everyone's identity.

We demand a national law establishing a workplace quota for trans people and special protections for trans people in their early childhood and elder years. We demand historical reparations and acknowledgement for transvestite and trans genocide. We hold the state responsible. Our integrity demands that we stand for respect and autonomy for obese and intersex bodies that are stigmatized and pathologized. We demand that public policy take into account women with disabilities.

We are here to declare that we want to live, that we have the right to pleasure, to go out freely at night without fear, to enjoy our sexualities without repression, without mandates, without harassment, without hierarchies. We have a right to parties and to love, we have a right to free time and to give consent when we want to give consent, just as we will say no and rebel against what is imposed on us against our will! And now we are together demanding justice for the transvesticide of Diana Sacayán [murdered in October 2015] and for all of our women comrades assassinated in hate crimes!

We are here to shout that there is no Ni Una Menos without demanding freedom for Higua [a queer woman imprisoned in 2017 for killing an attacker who threatened to rape her], for Mariana Gómez [jailed for kissing her wife in public in 2017], for Yanina Farfán [accused by a justice system that stigmatized her as a bad mother] and for Joe Lemonge [a trans boy imprisoned for defending himself against patriarchal trans hate].

There is no Ni Una Menos without demanding justice for Marielle Franco, riddled with bullets in Brazil under the Temer government, and there is no Ni Una Menos without crying loudly and clearly for freedom for 17-year-old Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi.

We will not allow this white, capitalist social system (a system that is misogynist, heteronormative, racist and sexist) to be placed above our right to live in this world being as we wish to be. We are against all forms of exploitation and oppression, we call out to our sisters around the world to keep fighting for our lives. Our movement will defend its anti-capitalist, anti-clerical, anti-patriarchal character.

We are independent from the state and its governments. We were the first to organize a national strike against this austerity government and now we say "No" to the agreement between Macri and the IMF. We demand the trade

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unions convene a national strike and propose a fighting plan to defeat the government.

We are going to conquer our right to safe, legal and free abortion. We demand the separation of church and state. We hope that all women will mobilize outside of Congress on June 13 when the abortion bill is scheduled to be debated so we can paint all of Latin America green.

**Sin #AbortoLegal, No Hay #NiUnaMenos  
Without #AbortionRights, No #EndViolenceAgainstWomen**

PS:

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[1] BBC News 14 June 2018, "[Argentina steps closer to legalising abortion](#)".