



81 mins/ 60 min versions available

PRODUCTION: UK/ NORWAY/ TURKEY

INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

**JAVA** FILMS

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**TAG LINE:** WHAT WOULD YOU RISK FOR YOUR FREEDOM?

**SHORT SYNOPSIS:** Ipek is part of a group of activists fighting to protect Turkish women against abuse and murder, by putting violent men behind bars. As femicides soar and Turkish society starts to fall apart, Ipek and her client's risk everything for their freedom.

**LONG SYNOPSIS**

More than one in three Turkish women have experienced domestic violence and the number of femicides is rising. But some Turkish women are fighting back. Ipek Bozkurt, a courageous lawyer, is determined to challenge this misogynistic trend by putting abusive men behind bars.

Working with a group of activists, Ipek is fighting to get justice for two survivors of horrific assaults: Arzu, married off at 14 to a farmer ten years her senior and Kubra, a successful and glamorous TV presenter. Arzu lost both legs and the use of her arms when her husband fired seven shotgun shells into her after she asked for a divorce. She must try to rebuild her life to regain custody of her children, who have been taken into care.

Kubra suffered a brain haemorrhage after being attacked by her husband, two days after giving birth. Her injuries resulted in the loss of her ability to speak and walk. Her husband denies attacking her and has kept their daughter. Kubra must undergo intensive speech therapy in order to testify against him in court. Unless he is convicted, Kubra may not see her daughter again.

During these cases, Ipek must fight not only against a legal system, which regularly gives light sentences to male perpetrators but an increasingly repressive government. After an attempted coup, there is an unprecedented crackdown on dissenting voices leaving Ipek, like thousands of other lawyers, fearing imprisonment.

Filmed over 5 years, DYING TO DIVORCE takes viewers into the heart of Turkey's gender-based violence crisis and the recent political events that have severely eroded democratic freedoms. Through intimately shot personal stories, the film gives a unique perspective on the struggle to be an independent woman in modern Turkey.



### IPEK BOZKURT & THE PLATFORM WE WILL STOP FEMICIDES

Ipek, the main contributor is a lawyer and activist for the platform WE WILL STOP FEMICIDE. The platform strives to stop femicide and ensure protection from violence for all women. The platform specifically campaigns for changes to Turkish law to ensure that women who are murdered or attacked by their husbands receive justice in the Turkish courts and that Turkey fully complies with its obligations under UN Convention for the Prevention of Violence Against Women.

The platform's activities take a variety of forms, from providing legal support for women and the families of those murdered, to staging demonstrations outside court and collecting data on the number of women killed. Over the years it has gained global attention for its work through its dynamic approach. For example, last summer it was one of the key drivers of the original of the [#ChallengeAccepted](#) campaign on Instagram (although this did not start in Turkey), posting black and white pictures each day of women killed to highlight the issue of domestic violence.



(Image: Left Protest in Ankara with MP Aylin Nazlıca Right: Contributor Ayşen Kavas from platform WE WILL STOP FEMICIDE)



#### **DIRECTOR CHLOË FAIRWEATHER**

Chloe Fairweather is an award-winning director who specialises in observational documentary and the telling of complex true stories. The Welsh born filmmaker started out in TV production over 10 years ago when she was selected for the BBC's Production Training Scheme. From here she learned her craft assisting documentary directors such as award-winning filmmaker Olly Lambert.

Her first film was shortlisted for The Grierson Best Newcomer Award in 2015 and was nominated for a BAFTA. Since then, she has made films for all the major British broadcasters. Her films tackle big issues through intimately shot stories and unique access. She is also a graduate of the Channel 4 Cutting Edge Directors scheme.

#### **DIRECTORS STATEMENT**

Dying to Divorce began when I met Arzu just weeks after her husband shot her in the arms and legs repeatedly. I was struck immediately by her unbelievable strength and horrified to understand that the terrible violence she has suffered was by no means unique. I knew I had to find out more. Five years later I still can't believe the dramatic turns both the women's' stories and the wider political landscape have taken. This film is a testament to the bravery of women in Turkey and a record of their ongoing struggle.

#### **FILMOGRAPHY**

*School*, (2018) BBC 2 – 60' (part of 4 -part series)

*I Do at 92*, (2016) Channel 4 - 60'- Shot and directed by Chloë Fairweather.

*Mr Alzheimer's and Me* (2015) CBBC 30' nominated for a Children's BAFTA, Broadcast Award and Shortlisted for Grierson Best Newcomer Award 2015.

*Taxidermy for Teenagers* (2017) Channel 4 Short

*Grapes of my Country* (2015) Elle Magazine

## THE PRODUCERS

The film is an international collaboration between award-winning Producer Sinead Kirwan, co-producer Elisabeth Kleppe and local Turkish producers Özge Sebzeci and Seda Gökçe.

Sinead Kirwan's first film won the 2014 Sheffield International Documentary Festival Audience Award (beating a film by Martin Scorsese) and went on to be screened in international festivals and cinemas across the globe. Her latest co production WHEN A CITY RISES has just been selected for a major festival and her first short drama BURN ON ARRIVAL, starring Kate Dickie and James Harkness has been selected for the Bafta qualifying Glasgow International Short Film Festival.

Seda Gökçe has worked as assistant director for feature films for many years. She produced and directed her first documentary 'Construction Site' for Al Jazeera Turk in 2013.

Özge Sebzeci is a photographer and a journalist based in Istanbul, Turkey. Her photography has appeared in outlets such as National Geographic and caught the eye of the Magnum Foundation which awarded her a fellowship.

Elisabeth Kleppe is an experienced producer in the Norwegian film industry with several award-winning feature documentary films and short films on her track record, such as WILD RELATIVES, THE WINDS OF CHANGE, TIME PASSES and MANIFEST. As a creative producer, she collaborates tightly with the directors in developing ideas and co-writing scripts. Elisabeth focuses on artistically strong projects with a social, political or environmental core.

## BROADCAST PARTNERS

The film has secured international broadcast in Europe and was coproduced through ARTE/WDR. A 60-minute version will be broadcast by NRK the Norwegian Public Broadcaster and DR the Danish public broadcaster. It was funded and developed through Creative Scotland and received support from the Fritt Ord Foundation and Western Norway Film Centre by Jesper Bergom-Larsson.



## PRESS

### TURKISH WOMENS RIGHTS ARE AT STAKE IN SUNDAYS ELECTION- PRI

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-04-14/turkish-womens-rights-are-stake-sundays-elections?fbclid=IwAR3yMuxLc7chtsOV9HXCCtUGRdLyf3EVAU77KR3KhxWcn6UUApYHJ-IGjwY>

### WOMEN SEEKING DIVORCE IN TURKEY ARE BEING MURDERED – VICE

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/gvze5m/women-seeking-divorce-in-turkey-are-being-murdered-by-their-husbands>

### DOCUMENTARY TO HIGHLIGHT DIVORCE STRUGGLES IN TURKEY

[https://www.stowefamilylaw.co.uk/blog/2015/11/02/documentary-to-highlight-divorce-struggles-in-turkey?fbclid=IwAR2NUsZDEKKV8knJHsm-bkR\\_npZAq7-R7k4BAnCQVg2aCjJsDpFm\\_2Wf7Ok](https://www.stowefamilylaw.co.uk/blog/2015/11/02/documentary-to-highlight-divorce-struggles-in-turkey?fbclid=IwAR2NUsZDEKKV8knJHsm-bkR_npZAq7-R7k4BAnCQVg2aCjJsDpFm_2Wf7Ok)

### DYING TO DIVORCE: A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY UK FEMALE FILMMAKERS- INDIE ACTIVITY

<https://www.indieactivity.com/dying-to-divorce-a-documentary-film-by-turkish-female-filmmakers/>

## CREDIT LIST

**Directed, Produced & Filmed by** Chloë Fairweather

**Produced by** Sinead Kirwan

**Edited by** Andrea Cuadrado & Paul Dosaj

**Director of Photography** Lilia Sellami

**Composer** Andy Cowton

**Producers - Turkey** Seda Gökçe & Özge Sebzeci

**Co-produced by** Elisabeth Kleppe (Aldeles)

**Executive Producers** Christina Asquith, Natasha Dack-Ojumu & Leslie Finlay

**Commissioning Editor for WDR/ARTE** Jutta Krug

**Sound Editor & Re-Recording Mixer** Ali Murray

**Colourist & Online Editor** Tormod Kyrre Hauge

**Motion Graphics & Animation** Andreas Næs

**Graphic Designer** Mario Urban Mannsåker & Lewis Macdonald

**The Monument Counter artwork courtesy of** Zeren Göktan

**VFX Artists** Andrew Donaldson & Sjur Pollen

**Assistant Producer** Mürvet Doğanlar

**Additional Editing** Colin Monie

**Additional Camera** Juliet Brown, Saf Suleyman & Özge Sebzeci

**Coproduced by** Aldeles

**Production company** Dying to Divorce Ltd

**International Distribution:** Java Films ([www.javafilms.tv](http://www.javafilms.tv))

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**UK Distribution:** Dartmouth Films/ Dying to Divorce Ltd – email: [Sinead.Kirwan@bad-bonobo.com](mailto:Sinead.Kirwan@bad-bonobo.com)