

No joke: Turkish women shouldn't laugh, says deputy PM

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In his moral crusade, Arınc also called for chastity in both men and women, while he blamed television and the media for turning teenagers into “sex addicts,” Hurriyet Daily News reports.

*“[The man] will not be a womanizer. He will be bound to his wife. He will love his children. [The woman] will know what is haram and not haram. She will not laugh in public. She will not be inviting in her attitudes and will protect her chasteness,”* the paper reported Arınc as saying. He was speaking in the western Bursa region to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, which commemorates the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting for Muslims.

His message was not well received by Turkey’s female population, who took to social media sites in droves to poke fun at Arınc. They posted pictures of themselves laughing under the hashtags, #kahkaha (#laughter) and #direnkahkaha (#resistlaughter) which have now gone viral.

Imitating a Turkish woman on her mobile, he said, *“Is there nothing else going on? What happened to Ayşe's daughter? When's the wedding?”*

Female politician, Melda Onur, a lawmaker from the main opposition party CHP said on Twitter Arınc's comments portrayed laughing as a dishonorable act and left women exposed to violence.

One women's organisation said it would file a criminal complaint against the deputy PM.

With Turkish presidential elections set for August, Arınc, who is a member of the ruling conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP), has come in for severe criticism from political rivals. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, who will be running against incumbent Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, took to Twitter to make fun of Arınc's statement.

*“Turkey needs women to laugh and the country needs to hear laughter more and more,”* İhsanoğlu said.

Anti-Erdogan bloggers responded with even greater anger.

*"Stop giving us moral lessons and instead count all the money that you have stolen,"* wrote one [Twitter](#) user, bturkmen, referring to corruption allegations against Erdogan and his circle that have surfaced in recent months.

The AKP is accused by its critics of seeking to erode Turkey's strict separation of religion and state – the basis of the secular republic founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s.

Anger at the government's attitudes toward secular Turks erupted into nationwide deadly protests that shook Erdogan last year, sparked by plans to redevelop a park in central Istanbul.

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