

## ZERO TOLERANCE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

On November 25, EuroMed Feminist Initiative joins the women of the world in commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Despite the persistent fight of women's rights activists and organizations to put an end to discrimination and violence against women and girls, violence against women is still a serious, pervasive and systematic problem, and women remain subjected to violence everywhere and at all moments of their lives.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is rooted in normative and institutional denial of fundamental human rights of women, denial of gender equality. Male oppression and discrimination, are sustained by legislations, favoring the impunity of perpetrators, universal social tolerance and the absence of legal and social protection mechanisms for victims.

Although violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread violations of human rights, decision makers do not address it as a political priority. Therefore, EuroMed Feminist Initiative calls upon all States and relevant stakeholders worldwide to undertake concrete actions to eliminate all forms of VAWG in compliance with CEDAW and Istanbul Convention, and in line with international instruments and standards. Governments must ensure accountability for perpetrators and guarantee zero tolerance for violence against women and girls. More efforts must be made to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women living under occupation and in countries under conflict.

EuroMed Feminist Initiative along with a consortium of women's rights organizations launched a Regional Campaign on *Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women and Girls*<sup>i</sup> in the Southern Mediterranean region, to contribute to the elimination of this violence by promoting a social environment that does not tolerate VAWG and where decision makers address it as a political priority. Awareness and knowledge about the extent, severity and consequences of VAWG, denunciation of social tolerance and victim blaming, educational activities, capacity building for CSOs, information on services for victims, training programs for judiciaries, police, health, social services staff are part of the actions of the campaign. In parallel, EFI through different programs<sup>ii</sup>, provides support for Syrian refugee women against all forms of violence in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. EFI supports a transition towards peace and democracy and peace building process in Syria, combatting VAW, challenging discriminative legislation,<sup>iii</sup>. Moreover, EFI supports women's participation in the peace building process in Syria<sup>iv</sup>.

Women and girls should live a life free of fear, violence and insecurity!

Join our Regional Campaign and demand Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women and Girls - [www.ostik.org/](http://www.ostik.org/)

*EuroMed Feminist Initiative is a policy network that encompasses women's rights organizations from the two shores of the Mediterranean. It provides expertise in the area of gender equality and women's rights as inseparable from democracy building and citizenship, advocates for political solutions to all conflicts, and for the right of peoples to self-determination.*

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<sup>i</sup> This program entitled "Combating Violence against Women in the Southern Mediterranean Region", funded by the European Union.

<sup>ii</sup> This program entitled "Strengthening access to protection, participation and services for women refugees, IDPs and host communities" funded by EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis "Madad Fund"

<sup>iii</sup> This program entitled "Towards Sustainable Peace and Democracy in Syria Through Strengthening Civil Society and Women's Rights" funded by Sweden

<sup>iv</sup> This program entitled "Enhancing Women's Participation in Decision Making and Peace Building Processes in Syria" funded by the European Union.