



EuroMed Feminist Initiative
المبادرة النسوية الأورومتوسطية
Initiative Féministe EuroMed

STATEMENT

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EuroMed Feminist Initiative

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ZERO TOLERANCE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, WOMEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE OUT OF FEAR

One of the biggest anachronisms of our “modern” times is that women all over the world are still suffering and dying simply because they are women. Conservative and fundamentalist movements are launching unprecedented attacks against the rights that women have gained through their hard struggles.

Personal, structural and cultural violences against women are interacting with each other to make this violence reaching such a level that “femicide” is now legitimately part of the feminist vocabulary. Femicide describes the murder of women through physical, mental, economic and structural violence which deprives women of their livelihood and their right to self-determination.

This systematic violence during peace is exacerbated during conflicts. It is well known that women are the first victims of wars, occupation and displacement.

VAWG still remains perceived as a private matter and stays in the shadow. It is essential to unveil VAWG as a political problem and work toward abolishing discriminative legislation and criminalizing VAWG by law.

Reforming public opinion and perception of victims through awareness campaigns and education is also a key in combatting VAWG since violence against and oppression of women are linked to the stereotypical perceptions of men as violent and women as passive in the face of violence. Thus, guilt is mainly on women accused of contributing to perpetuation of violence, while the perpetrators have always the benefit of mitigating circumstances: from economic crisis, to psychological fragility or social pressure. Fundamentally, social and cultural roots and causes of this violence are remaining in the dark.

Human security must be at the top of the political agendas addressing both the proliferation of weapons that threaten the security of people and establishing international alliances to include violence against women in the security concept.

During the last gender regional platform, a civil society led dialogue developed by EFI these past years, gender and legal experts and civil society organizations raised the urgent need to counteract

violence and to challenge oppression and discrimination against women while offering concrete recommendations to governments

- To adopt comprehensive legislation to combat VAW.
- To institutionalize funds and provide regular training programs on Gender Equality, including VAW, for all government officials, public authorities, professional actors and service providers involved.
- To ensure that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) combating VAW enjoy safe and unrestricted working conditions and are guaranteed sufficient resources to carry out their activities.
- To organize national campaigns of zero tolerance of VAW in cooperation with Women Rights CSOs

Taking into account these recommendations, EFI will develop next year a powerful campaign with the support of the EU, in 7 countries of the southern Mediterranean region, in order to change public perceptions and favor a comprehensive approach to VAW. The campaign will spread awareness and knowledge about the extent, severity and consequences of this violence, denounce social tolerance and victim blaming, and aim to make VAW a top social and political priority. It will include educational activities in schools and universities, capacity building for CSOs that combat VAWG, dissemination of information on existing services for victims, and training programs for judiciaries, police, health, social services staff to increase their knowledge and skills as 'first responders'.

In Parallel EFI, through MADAD program (*), supports Syrian refugee women against all forms of violence and abuse of their basic rights in three main host countries Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

Violence against women can't be dissociated from other forms of domination. Questioning all of them and working to reinforce cooperation, dialogue and transnational alliances among women's rights organizations, EuroMed Feminist Initiative appeals to all women and men, to all democratic and progressive movements to unite in solidarity with the feminist struggle to end violence against women and to pose this issue as a democratic demand towards governments as well as international institutions and UN bodies. Democracy, justice and peace cannot be achieved if half of the population is oppressed by the other.

EuroMed Feminist Initiative.

16 days of activism against VAW.

November 2018

(This program entitled "Strengthening access to protection, participation and services for women refugees, IDPs and host communities" is funded by EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis "Madad Fund"*

EuroMed Feminist Initiative-EFI advocates for gender equality and women's rights as inseparable from democracy building and citizenship, for political solutions to all conflicts, and for the right of peoples to self-determination.

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