

DECLARATION

TO:

THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL MR. BAN KI-MOON

THE UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL UN WOMEN MS. MICHELLE BACHELET

THE UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN MS RASHIDA MANJOO

THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

We, 120 women and men from 24 countries from around the world gathered in Cairo Egypt on 16th -18th December 2010 at the Global Conference “*Women and the 21 Century-Feminist Alternatives*” to elaborate feminist proposals for peace and social justice with secularism as a global precondition for democracy and development; to provide space for feminists to share their experiences and knowledge with other feminists and peace activists, researchers and practitioners on the ground and to promote feminist alternatives to the present increasing influence of religious fundamentalisms and conservative patriarchal dominance.

As a continuation of the International Conference held in Skopje in October 2009 to strengthen feminist strategies for transformative action, we the participants at the Cairo Global Conference in December 2010 asserted that:

1. *In the 21st century patriarchal societies, women continue to be the subject of systemic exclusion from decision-making spheres and institutions all over the world. This leads to gross marginalization of women’s needs in all fields and strongly questions the meaning of the existing concepts of democracy, peace and security. Real peace and democracy imply full implementation of women’s human rights and a life free of all forms of violence against women. State security will never include women’s security as long as women continue to be marginalized in the decision making spheres.*
2. *Fundamentalist movements across the world are launching increasing attacks against the rights that women have gained through their hard won struggles over the centuries. Women’s rights are universal human rights and should not be compromised for any reason. Religion is a private, individual matter and should not interfere in women’s reproductive and sexual rights. Secularism, based on the strict separation between religion and State, is a precondition to a real democratic society where all people regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, origin, class, religion, age, disability should be afforded dignity and respect.*
3. *In the face of the present global economic crisis of the capitalist system women are paying the highest price of all, facing insecurity, low salaries, low pensions, unemployment, and poverty. 80 % of the poor workers are women. Poverty is not only*

a lack of financial means, it is also a lack of access to full citizenship and to power over ones own life choices. The transfer of responsibilities of the States and collectivities towards the private sphere is penalizing women first, by making it impossible for majority of women to combine a professional life or involvement in the public sphere with their family life. While women suffer disproportionately under the economic crises and the policies of austerity global military expenditure is not affected at all.

4. *Violence against women persists across the world as a way to systematically exercise dominance and control over women. Furthermore the universal social tolerance to this violence is supported by the promotion and adoption of discriminatory legislation in many countries. Thus violence such as prostitution, slashing, stoning, rape and sexual abuse are getting State and governmental acceptance. Violence against women hinders social development, freedom and choices of women and is severely limiting women's ability to live their lives without fear. Violence against women is a detrimental attack on women's bodily, intellectual and psychological integrity. The international conventions and resolutions on violence against women, as well as other positive legislation to curb this violence are neither implemented nor adopted in full, as is the case with CEDAW in several countries.*
5. *Women always carry the heaviest burden of war and occupation. The subjugation of women and domestic and sexual violence in peace turns into rape, sexual assaults and slavery in war - all these used as a strategy of war to humiliate the "enemy" and to conquer "his" community. This continues to be true of the on-going military conflicts all over the world. "Women's liberation" does not come with military interventions; military solutions to conflicts neither prevent nor stop rape in any part of the world as we have witnessed in Bosnia, in Kosovo, Sudan, Congo or elsewhere.*

Therefore as participants of the Cairo Global Conference:

- **We demand immediate global measures, affirmative actions and policies to facilitate women's equal participation in all the places of decision making in political and economic institutions, with minimum of 30% gender quotas. We are convinced that increased participation of women in the governing of the world is an important step towards the abolishment of patriarchal methods of dominance, continuous violence against women and civilian populations and will lead to a decrease of military interventions and wars as solutions to conflicts and conflict resolutions among States and Nations.**
- **We urge all States to ensure that their legislation and family codes are based on civil, women's and human rights values, without allowing intrusion of religions in public, political and legislative spheres and to take urgent measures to change the educational and cultural systems based on**

patriarchal values, which perpetuates subjugation and inferiority of women in public and family life.

- **We condemn the violence exercised against women and girls in all its forms - physical, sexual, psychological, economical, institutional and structural and urge the Security Council, United Nations and all governments to take urgent action to improve gender equality globally and to promote and pass binding legislation with zero tolerance against perpetrators.**
- **We urge the international community to intervene and, by concrete measures, to force Israel to leave the occupied Palestinian territories and to lift the blockade against Gaza. Gaza has been turned into a jail for women, men and children in total contravention of UN resolutions and international law. We condemn the international lack of political will to effectively act against such atrocity as an unprecedented in our times. We urge the UN to recognise the State of Palestine as a necessary step and a precondition for transparent and participatory comprehensive peace process in the whole Middle East Region.**
- **We demand an immediate end of all occupation and refute all claims that the military presence is a way to “liberate women”. We demand an immediate stop of all forms of military interventions as a way to solve conflicts and of all types of violent attacks against civilians. We remind responsible politicians and world leaders that UN programs and scientific peace research have presented many civil ways to solve conflicts and stop occupations, targeting responsible persons and institutions without hurting the civilians.**

The feminist movement is an internationalist and peace movement, advocating non-violent methods for conflict resolution and against all forms of oppression, military aggression and occupation; promoting progressive initiatives to bring about gender equality and freedom, for a world where everybody can have same possibility to develop own capacities and live a decent life in peace, social justice and in real democracy.

Cairo, December 18th 2010