

**European Coordinators
of the World Women's Conference of grass-roots women
Maria Hagberg, Monika Gaertner-Engel, Halinka Augustin,
Angélica Urrutia, 10. November 2015**



**Call for the 25th of November 2015 –
the international day of struggle and action
in the World Women's Conference process**

We have now the biggest refugee catastrophe since the second world war. 60 billions of people escape from oppression, violence and war. The worldwide patriarchal shows its ugly face in its most dreadful way by raw capitalism, by militarism, by religious and political racism and fascism and human trafficking and slavery.

When women from the Balkan Conflict during the 1990ties witnessing in The European Parliament they told us about rape, and other sexual abuse in war, and about sex trafficking in the trail of war, post conflict situations. They also told us how soldiers used sexual abuse towards women who came from firm religious and traditional societies. After the women were raped they were not only threatened by the enemy but also by their own families because they were blamed for the rape. A lot of women escaped home, sometimes giving birth to children as a result of the rape. They later abandoned these children, and then going on to become suicidal or victims of sex trafficking themselves.

Now we can see the same pattern in Syria, Iraq, Nigeria, Congo and Sudan and among many other countries in conflict.

Violence against women makes into a women's issue but violence against men makes into a society issue! This is obvious not least when it comes to violence in war. We need to talk about femicide while violence in war has as main goal to exterminate the enemy by humiliating the female population by sexual assaults and crimes.

The similarities between the individual cases of violence and the cases of violence from war and occupation undoubtable.

In Iraq we are well aware of the post conflict situation. The lack of women's involvement in the peace process and in the rebuilding of the society is obvious. When the peace situation stabilised in Kurdistan, as well as in other parts of Iraq, the war towards women escalated. Over the last years the figures when it comes to violence against women are terrible high. All of the violence is "honour" related, according to the women's organisations in Iraq and they also have an increasing sex trafficking situation. That also shows comparability to the Balkan post conflict situation.

In the trail of the war the society is very corrupt and the infrastructure has collapsed. BUT this is not a priority for governments to deal with and neither is the violence against women.

Now we have the similar situation in Syria and the girls and women are victims of double oppression. They are stuck in the refugee camps not able to escape and there they are targets for forced marriages, child marriages and sex trafficking. If they escape to Europe they are vulnerable targets for the same threats. Women are damned if they do and damned if they do not – but they are struggling and defending themselves.

In Iraq the NGOs take responsibility for the peace building while the oil money goes to corruption and crime.

The government was put together by the occupying USA and consists of a group of different religious community continuing the oppression of women. The women in the government are much under-represented and strong and critical women are harassed and killed. A communist women's activist was beheaded in her own home. Other women are slaughtered in the streets if they go for work or do not wear veil – regardless of religious belief. A rumour questioning your dignity as a woman is enough to be beaten, harassed, tortured or killed. The outcome of the US occupation of Iraq is ISIL. The terror against women especially minorities are increasing.

In Turkey there is still a civil war going on between Kurdish and Turkish forces. In the rural districts honour related violence is used by the Turkish military police to harass the Kurdish women and to demoralise the Kurdish people. Many young women escape from their homes to the towns without anything when they have been either “seduced” or raped by the military police in Turkey. The terror attack in Ankara recently was a direct attack against the Kurdish and other minorities in the country.

In Europe we have an increasing fascist and racist movement and also in the political sphere. At the same time a much stronger movement of international solidarity and welcome for the refugees. We can easily see that the fascist agenda is similar where ever it appears. It is hostile against women, homophobic and racist. The women are underrepresented as asylum seekers and they are very few comparing to the men and boys seeking for asylum. In many countries 4/5 are men and 1/5 are women seeking for asylum. That means that majority of women are staying in the war zones. When the women seek for asylum women's reasons for asylum when it comes to sexual abuse are ignored and made invisible. Women's reasons are almost always counted in relationship to a man.

What does this has to do with UN resolution 1325 about women's involvement in peace process?

We have by the courageous female soldiers in Kobanê and Rojava seen the impact of women as warriors. Only armed women are respected as equal? Or? The same experiences are in other wars including women in the guerilla fight.

There is no doubt of the lack of female/feminist influence when it comes to make decisions regarding war, neither before, during or after a war as well as in post conflict peace process. Except when they take armed part of the struggle or become a strong organised force.

We can easily see that female warriors have a big impact in defending against state oppression and neo-colonialism. The brave (female) soldiers in Rojava and Kobanê proved that women's impact in defence and in the struggle for freedom, democracy and women's rights is very important. Thanks to them, we and they now are able to help rebuild places in ruins. Some of them as soldiers sacrificed their lives but others inspire the new generation that resistance and success are possible.

We will with our call for the 25th of November 2015 honour all brave women who have sacrificed their lives either as war victims or as female warriors fighting for their independence, freedom and democracy.

The 2nd World Women's Conference will take place in Kathmandu, Nepal, March 13-18, 2016
www.worldwomensconference.org