

## **To the General Assembly of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Women's Conference**

### **Middle Eastern Regional Report**

The Middle East is the stage of a Third World War, now happening. We are in a process where imperialist forces try to redesign the Middle East according to their interest and profits. The "Big Middle East Project" or the "Green Belt Project" took its beginning in 1980 in Afghanistan and is now concentrating in Syria and Iraq, especially in the Kurdish regions. The attacks of the Islamic State (IS) in this region started in form of a proxy war with different imperialist and regional forces in the background but changed its characteristic. It turned into a war with different actors, dynamics and changing fronts. Dozens of forces are now directly engaged in this war, which cannot be seen only as a war to defeat IS, but as part of the mentioned "Big Middle East Project". In this meaning, neocolonialism is creating war and sectarian conflicts.

But the Middle East is not only place of war, crises and conflict. It is not just object of projects from external forces. The people of the Middle East have their own future project, too. The project of a Democratic Middle East based on the notion of democratic nations and democratic autonomy today is practiced by the Kurdish liberation movement and its allies in Turkey and Syria. This project of a Democratic Middle East is led by women. Real revolutions need to have a female characteristic. Only women are able to create real change. Therefore in the Middle East women are not only victims of war, but subjects of a new process which will lead to democratic, pluralist, gender liberated societies and a new order.

**TURKEY:** The women in Turkey are subjects of one of the most difficult struggles as they are faced with an extremely fascist, sexist, patriarchal and Islamist state. Under the current AKP government attacks against women in all areas of life increased extremely. Because the government is determining the behavior of society in a way that is nourishing violence against women as women are reduced to bearing machines and an exclusion from politics, economics, social life etc. is legitimized. The attacks against women, their bodies, their minds, their rights are highly increasing. But not only that; during the last months a lot of female militant were killed due to extralegal executions by Turkish state forces, dozens are imprisoned. This state is trying to cancel all the rights women have won in result of a long struggle.

**KURDISTAN:** The Turkish women are fighting in a common way for freedom. As the Kurdish liberation movement together with the Turkish left is the biggest obstacle in front of Turkish state fascism, the attacks of the state have the character of a total war against the people. Especially women are being targeted. Since the last months hundreds of women have been killed by state forces. More than 20 female Kurdish co-mayors have been either arrested or

Killed female militants and guerilla fighters have been photographed naked by Turkish state forces, which distribute these pictures in social media, to attack the honor of the Kurdish people. But the Kurdish women are answering these attacks by declaring that their freedom is their honor.

**SYRIA & ROJAVA:** In Syria and Rojava women still are mostly affected by the ongoing war. People that are forced to leave their country lose their life on the sea due to human trafficking. But Rojava at the same time became a symbol of women's resistance and self-defense against IS and fundamentalism. In Rojava a woman's revolution is happening. Women have taken over the

leadership in the process of establishing a new social and political system which is based on democracy, direct participation, pluralism and gender liberation.

IRAQ: In Iraq women are still suffering a lot of war and patriarchy. A male culture is determining the whole life, from politics to economics, from culture to the social life. Although there is a quota of 30 percent, women mostly are excluded from decision making processes. But the resistance of female guerilla fighters against IS in Northern Iraq is making a deep impact on women all over Iraq. The notion that women are not objects but subjects is growing due to women's resistance. A lot of women are asking for self-defense training to be able to defend themselves against both, potential attacks from IS and domestic or male violence.

IRAN: In Iran, while the state is trying to change its negative image in the outside world, the attacks against women are increasing and are becoming finer. The regime is trying to break women's struggle for their rights with all means. There are a lot of female political prisoners and many of them are faced with death penalty and execution. Zeynep Celaliyan is one of them. But despite of all difficulties and state oppression the resistance of Iranian women for freedom is growing. The regime is not able to break the big desire of women for freedom.

PALESTINE: In Palestine war keeps on being the main matter influencing lives of women. The not solved political question in Palestine, attacks of the Israeli state, occupation and political differences lead to big sorrow. Although Palestinian women played an important role in the resistance, today they are more or less excluded from the political process and negotiations between the different political parties. But here also the struggle of women is winning more and more quality. Women demand to be subjects in all parts of the life.

LEBANON: In Lebanon there are a lot of women's organizations and associations that work on different issues. Although there is no active war at the moment, the political conflict there is still not resolved and Lebanon is also under threat of attacks by IS. Also organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood or Islamofascist groups are making efforts to regain the rights of women in the country.