

## Violence Against Women and Children An Imported Epidemic from the Secular West

Extensive violence within marriage has become the norm for an ever-increasing number of women and children in the Muslim lands. In particular, the race in copying the Western life-style and rule, domestic violence casts an ever-increasing ever-darker shadow upon Muslim societies.

The disintegration of the family unit, and thus the integrity and harmony of the social life in the Muslim lands is the ineluctable consequence mainly of the promotion of man-made secular and liberal concepts and values invented by the Western capitalist ideology. This ideology postulates that the ideals to be sought by man are the sublime values that man lays down for himself. Based upon that, in particular the Western ideal of gender equality is one of the basic concepts that besmeared our societies and families with the same afflictions which plague the non-Islamic Western people. It corrupts relations in marital and social life through liberal freedoms and the pursuit of selfish desires; it undermines all elements of respect, wellbeing, dignity for women, children, and the men of society. At the same time the intensive secularist condemnation of Islamic social laws leaves Muslim families under the choke of desperation.

And the assumption – as often claimed by modern intellectuals – that the painful ongoing decay in our societies is simply the fallout of unskilful policies; is utterly wrong! Rather it is the inevitable consequence of the capitalist ideology, which is unable to effectively address the vital issues of its own people. Hence to ensure its survival, it has no other option than to cover its own decay as well as vilifying and destroying the culture and lifestyles of other belief-systems. Thus and in particular the problem of violence in our societies, in particular domestic violence, is the outcome of a long pre-planned insidious western project to colonise our lands, which materialised through the implementation of secular ruling systems, their regimes, official bodies, associations and feminist women's rights organizations, which are all instruments of colonialist powers utilized to subjugate the Muslim people. This article is going to evidence the magnitude of violence in families and against women and girls that is spreading in our Muslim lands.

**Tunisia** is the first country in the Arab world that introduced a modern Code of Personal Status (CPS) in January 1957 that replaced many Islamic social and family laws with those based upon secularism. This staunchly secular state was always presented by Western governments, feminists and institutions as a model of securing women's rights in the Muslim world. However, the promotion and implementation of secular liberal values, policies, and laws within its society have only led to an increase in oppression of its people and in particular violence against women. Today, the North African country currently has *one of the highest rates of domestic violence in the world* with research showing that nearly half of all women as victims of this crime at some point in their life. A study conducted by the Tunisian Democratic Women (ATFD, French acronym) revealed that 84% of women who are victims of violence are married, and 82% of cases happen in the matrimonial home.

The National Office for Family and Population has revealed that about 50% of Tunisian women have suffered some form of violence, and that 42% of them are university graduates. An aggregate sample of 3000 women, showed that 31% had been victims of physical

violence, 28% suffered sexual violence and 7.1% were subject to economic violence (13<sup>th</sup> August 2014). This year, another study, published by the Center for Research, Study, Documentation and Information on Women (a Tunisian group in cooperation with the UN), found that 70 – 90 percent of women had been victims of sexual harassment, mostly on public transportation, from 2011 to 2015.

Another source of concern regarding the safety of women in the country is women trafficking. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Tunisia is a source, destination and transit country for women who are “subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking.”*

All of this illustrates that any adaptations in laws have not only failed to protect the women in Tunisia, but in fact led to a worsening of oppression and an increase in violence. And still, the country is eager to implement further secular Western ideals and laws, like the establishment of full gender equality in its new constitution, and the “The Law on Eliminating Violence against Women” that is to come into force this year.

**Turkey** is another Muslim country that is given the mission to play a role model for women’s rights and to be the pioneer in promoting and implementing capitalist values like secularism, democracy and gender-equality in the Muslim world. Turkey has actively participated in almost every international agreement regarding women. It ratified the UN’s international treaty, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1986, and established the General Directorate on the Status of Women (GDSW) as a national mechanism in 1990 which greatly contributed to the active participation of Turkey in the UN’s Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on women’s rights’ processes in 1995. It was the first country who signed the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence on May 11<sup>th</sup> 2011 and became the first country to ratify it on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Combating violence against women was recognized as a state policy and embraced by many organs of the state since 1995.

Yet all these actions and all efforts and initiatives to promote and implement gender equality within the country produced the ***fastest increasing rates of violence against women in the world***. According to the Turkish Ministry of Justice, from 2003 (when the AKP came to power) until 2014, there was a 1,400 percent increase in the number of murders of women. And it is worth noting that the greatest changes in laws and regulations according to international agreements like CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration were made by the AKP government.

According to TUIK (Turkish Statistical Institute), four out of ten women face domestic violence, while Turkey’s Ministry of Family and Social Policies reported that 86% of women in Turkey experienced physical or psychological violence from a partner or family member. Over 300 women died of domestic violence in 2015 alone. In 2014, dozens of women were killed by their abusive spouses even after applying for police protection. Currently Turkey runs approximately 100 official shelters that accommodate fewer than 3,000 women, with overburdened non-profit organizations struggling to care for the remaining 20,000-plus women who seek shelter each year. The report of a women’s organization (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu) revealed 409 murders of women, 387 recorded cases of sexual abuse of children, and 332 recorded cases of sexual violence towards women in 2017. These numbers are rapidly increasing every year. Additionally, spine-chilling is one development regarding violence towards children. A new trend is arising in divorce cases,

where fathers murder their own children in revenge for the divorce they reject. Thus, 20 children were murdered by their own fathers in 2017 alone.

Numbers and reports from other Muslim countries, ruled by secular and other non-Islamic regimes and systems, paint similar dark pictures: In **Afghanistan** 80% of Afghan women experience or have experienced at least one type of violence during their lives (UNFPA 2016). The Public Health Ministry registered 8,188 cases of gender-based violence of which 2,806 cases were physical violence, 3,470 psychological abuse, 1,207 lack of access to resources, 403 forced marriages, 166 sexual assaults and 136 sexual harassments against women. The Afghan Ministry of Women Affairs announced almost 4,000 recorded cases of violence against women in 2017.

Around 1.5 million women in **Egypt** are subjected to domestic violence each year at a rate of more than 4,000 cases every day (National Council for Women in Egypt / 2016). In **Palestine**, about 37% of women who have been married have been subjected to a form of violence by their husbands (National Survey on Violence in Palestinian Society, 2011). **Indonesia** has similar statistics which briefly state that 245,548 cases of violence against wives occurred in 2016 alone (Komnas Perempuan, 2016). **Malaysia** follows with 10,282 reported domestic violence cases in January 2016 alone (WAO, 2016). According to the BBC's Persian service, 66.3 % of women in **Iran** experience violence in their lives (RUDAW, 2014).

***This huge scourge of violence against women and domestic violence is in fact a phenomenon imported into our lands from the West which is suffering from an epidemic of such crimes itself due to its capitalist, secular and liberal value system.*** For example, in the **UK**, 1.2 million women reported domestic abuse in England and Wales in the year ending 2016, and 1 woman in 4 experiences domestic violence (Office for National Statistics). In 2014, a survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), revealed that ***one third of women in the European Union have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15***, corresponding to 62 million people. The survey which covered 28 European countries also found that 1 in 10 women in the continent have suffered some form of sexual violence and 1 in 20 had been raped. 55% had experienced sexual harassment, often in the workplace, with 75% of women in qualified professions or top management jobs having been subjected to this form of violation against their dignity, dismantling the oft-repeated claim that employment is the path to elevating women's status. Interestingly, ***countries with the highest number of incidence of violence were Denmark (52%), Finland (47%), and Sweden (46%)*** – states which have been praised for their gender equality laws and labelled as the most gender egalitarian according to the UN Gender Equality Index, the World Economic Forum report of 2013, and the European Institute for Gender Equality.

And these are some statistics about violence in the **USA**, published in the Huffington Post on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2017: Every single day more than 570 people experience sexual violence in this country which is full of near-daily stories of sexual assaults on college campuses, and that is even ruled by a President who has been publicly accused of sexually assaulting more than 15 women. Almost 18 million women have been victims of rape since 1998. 1 in 6 American women survived an attempted or actual rape in their lifetime. The average number of victims of rape per year amounts to 321,500. In addition, domestic violence is extremely common in the **U.S.A.**, where about 5 million women experience intimate partner-related physical violence... and so forth... Every type of sexual assault, rape and other types of

violence can be found at epidemic levels in this country, yet it claims to be the guardian of women's and human rights.

**Worldwide** women and girls make up 80% of the estimated 800,000 people trafficked across national borders annually, with 70% of them trafficked for sexual exploitation. Up to 7 in 10 women in the world report having experienced physical and or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime. Worldwide up to 50 % of sexual assaults are committed against girls under the age of 16. More than 100 Million girls are missed due to prenatal sex selection. And all this has unfolded under the watch of the capitalist secular liberal system that dominates international and national politics today and has shown itself to be absolutely clueless and incapable of stemming this tide of violence against women and girls. Furthermore, the host of gender-equality laws, acts and initiatives as well as programmes and legislation promoted internationally and implemented within western and Muslim states to tackle violence against women and girls have failed spectacularly to even dent the scale of this problem.

These examples of the Muslim and non-Muslim world show that the liberal secular values of capitalism, which encourage individuals to act upon their whims and desires and whose entertainment industries, have denigrated the status of women and promoted sexual freedoms which corrupt and harm the relationship between the genders within society and have directly fuelled the degrading, humiliating and violent behaviour towards women all across the world. Additionally, the lack of convincing and satisfying rules and laws to regulate the affairs and interaction between men and women as well as the lack of adequate punishment for any transgressions against the honour and dignity of women led to the ungovernable escalation of violence against women. As long as these corrupt values and views remain predominant in our societies, making a few policies or laws or setting up initiatives and women's organisations will consistently fail to address this problem. Rather they will simply continue the status quo, preserving the dominance and existence of the harmful colonialist-based belief-system and structures in our Muslim lands, increasing further crimes which violate the dignity and wellbeing of women, and accelerating the destruction of the social fabric of our Muslim societies.

The only remedy for this epidemic is to reject as a whole the defective secular liberal systems imposed upon us by Western capitalist colonialists and to shape the future of the Muslim lands upon the Islamic system alone.

﴿قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

**“Say (to the people O’ Muhammad): ‘Do you wish to teach Allah about your Din (complete way of life) whereas Allah knows all that is contained in the Heavens and all that is upon the Earth; and surely Allah has complete knowledge of everything.’” [Al-Hujraat: 16]**

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