

Press Release

The 60th Anniversary of Tunisia's Personal Status Code Should not be a Cause for Celebration but Recognition of Secularism's Failure to Secure a Dignified Life for Women

The 13th of August marked the 60th anniversary of Tunisia's Personal Status Code (PSC) introduced in 1956 by the staunch secular dictator Habib Bourguiba. The PSC abolished the sublime Islamic social laws and replaced them with rulings shaped upon flawed Western secular principles such as gender equality. Polygamy was outlawed, a minimum age for marriage for men and women set, and Islamic rulings on divorce and marriage were changed to conform to secular ideals. This reformation of social laws was hailed misleadingly by feminists, secularists, and Western governments as a mark of progression and modernity and a step forward in elevating the status of women in the country and led to Tunisia being described as a model for how to secure women's rights in the Muslim world. Since the enactment of the PSC, successive secular governments in Tunisia further westernized the country's social laws upon gender equality ideals, under the deceptive promise that it would improve the lives of its women.

So we ask, what exactly has the PSC, or the full ratification of the gender equality-based CEDAW treaty, or enshrining total gender equality in Tunisia's new constitution, or the achievement of gender parity in electoral laws – actually achieved for women in the country? This March, a study by the Center for Research, Studies Documentation and Information on Women revealed that 53% of women in Tunisia are subjected to violence in public places. This mirrors the level of abuse that women face in other secular states regardless of their countless gender equality laws. In the US for example, a woman is beaten every 9 seconds, 3 women are killed every day by a current or former partner, and 1 in 6 women have been the victim of a rape or attempted rape. Furthermore, women in Tunisia today live in a state where they face mass unemployment, mass poverty, and where suicide rates have rocketed in some regions due to the miserable economic conditions facing the people.

Therefore, the secularization of Tunisia's social laws and its secular system have brought nothing but the erosion of the harmony of family life due to promoting lewd lifestyles and competition between the genders in their roles and rights. They caused the reduction of marriages and birth of children due to valuing employment over motherhood and forcing women into the workplace. And they burdened women with the financial worries, strains, and responsibilities of men by making them 'equal' wage earners for their families while they continued to bear the bulk of the duties of care to their children, parents, and home-life. Infact, women in Tunisia have not even achieved equality in pay for taking on all this. A study in March on the private agricultural sector, conducted by the Tunisian Association for Cultural Action, revealed that 99% of women do not receive equal pay to men for doing the same job. So we ask – how modern and progressive is all this? Indeed, how modern and progressive is it to blindly follow the flawed secular system of Western states down their well-trodden path of failure in securing respect, justice and rights for women, OR to believe that accumulating more and more gender equality laws which have failed for decades to improve the status of women internationally will magically better their lives? Indeed, the promises of the secularists proved to be nothing but a Western-inspired deception, while the PSC was a victory only for those who wished to attack Islam. Dignity, rights, and prosperity for the women of Tunisia and the whole Muslim world can only be guaranteed by the establishment of the Khilafah, the System of Lord of the Worlds, for He (swt) alone knows how to organize the roles of men and women, and the structure of family life and society in a manner that ensures that the needs of all are met in a just and harmonious way. So we call the women of Tunisia and the whole Muslim world to reject the PSC, gender equality and all foreign-inspired destructive experiments in social engineering and to work for the urgent establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood in which their salvation from oppression lies.

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بَقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمَانُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا﴾

“But the Unbelievers,- their deeds are like a mirage in sandy deserts, which the man parched with thirst mistakes for water; until when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing.” [24:39]

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