



Facts Paper

Patterns of Violence against Women in the Middle East



Brief overview of the situation of violence against women in the Middle East

1. Women and girls in the Middle East and North Africa are no longer immune from danger, especially in light of the escalation of violence against them. This violence stems from three basic levels, starting with the family, then society, and then the governing power, whether governments or authorities for a de facto situation. Therefore, it is a compound violence that takes a hierarchical form. Statistics confirm that 37% of Arab women in the Middle East have experienced some form of violence in their lives.
2. Women are subjected to violence at the hands of a family member, which sometimes amounts to killing under the pretext of honor, without the existence of deterrent laws for the perpetrators of these crimes, and even with impunity for most of them. During the first half of 2021, 385 were killed by a member of her family for various reasons that represent the marginalization of women is common denominator for all of them.
3. It is estimated that 14% of Arab girls in the Middle East are married under the age of 18, for example 5% of Iraqi children marry at the age of 15 and 24% are married at the age of 18.
4. Families circumcise their daughters, thinking that it preserves their chastity and purity, while it negatively affects women's physical, psychological, sexual and reproductive health in the future. Estimates confirm that at least 200 million women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have been subjected to female genital mutilation FGM worldwide, especially Common in the Middle East.
5. Well-established patriarchal community traditions force women to accept the fait accompli resulting from the psychological and physical pain of societal sexual abuse and harassment in the workplace, transportation and public places. Victims do not dare to approach police stations to report harassment for fear of social stigma, especially in tribal communities. Women have to bear the pain without disclosing it. According to UN data, 40-60% of



women, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, are subjected to verbal harassment in the streets.

Threatening Family Structure: The Tragic Truth of Domestic Violence in the Middle East

6. The physical and psychological well-being of women in their families in the Middle East is at stake, as they are subjected to various forms of repression and violence by a member of their family, whether father, brother or husband. These practices are based on strict patriarchal criteria, which are shaped by the vast stock of customs, traditions, social norms and cultural inheritance. It is estimated that during the first half of 2021, some 385 homicides were recorded in isolated areas of the Middle East, particularly within Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Algeria and Kuwait, in conjunction with the failure of most Governments to take measures to prosecute the perpetrators and their impunity
7. In the meantime, human rights estimates indicate an increase in the rates of domestic murders in Turkey to record 200 cases during the first 9 months of the year 2021. This comes in conjunction with the government's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, which provides protection for women from violence, and in Jordan, about 14 women and girls were killed during the period between January and October of the year 2021 due to crimes of domestic violence in particular honor crimes. In September 2021, a husband poured a burning material on his wife and burned her in front of her three children with great brutality, not only this, but before killing her he was torturing her and working her very harshly in a crime that provoked The outrage of the Jordanian society, and in Palestine, 12 Palestinian women were killed inside the 48 lands between January and November of the year 2021, which resulted in the intervention of civil society to issue an electronic campaign to raise awareness against domestic violence, and in Egypt 28% of



women are still subjected to physical and psychological violence at the hands of their families While in Iraq, data confirmed the occurrence of about 1,449 domestic violence crimes in the period from June to August of the year 2021.

Women murders in Middle Eastern Countries and North Africa during the first half of 2021

- Kuwait: more than 3 murders
 - Morocco: more than 5 murders
 - Lebanon: more than 5 murders
 - Iraq: more than 8 murders
 - Iran: more than 10 murders
 - North and East Syria: more than 34 murder
 - Palestine: 8 murders
 - Jordan: 13 murders
 - Syria: 24 murders
 - Egypt: 136 murders
 - Turkey: 150 murders
8. In North African countries, the matter will not be much different. In Algeria, a group of women artists launched an electronic campaign in October 2020 to combat domestic violence, after it reached alarming levels, as Algeria recorded 54 cases of murder of women as a result of domestic violence during the year 2020, while Algerian journalist Tinhinan Laseb was killed by her husband in January 2021, and Warda Hafez was also killed in the same month in front of her daughter by her husband, after he hit her on the head with a hammer and stabbed her five times in the heart. On the other hand, in Tunisia, despite the existence of laws to protect women from domestic violence, they will not escape the escalation of violence against them. In May 2021, feminist activists launched an electronic campaign on social media platforms under the title “I am the next victim,” after a woman was killed by her husband, the security man, despite her having filed a complaint against him about verbal and physical violence against her, but the security services failed to protect her.
 9. On the other hand, and in the Arabian Gulf, legal loopholes allow for an increase in the phenomenon of domestic violence, as it either does not provide full protection for women or grants the offender immunity from punishment. Tribal heritage. In August 2021, social media users denounced the lack of mechanisms to protect women in domestic violence, against the background of the killing of a Saudi woman by her husband with a stone and then running over her with a car. Before the brother before the accident twice.
 10. At the same time, women and girls are still victims of honor killings. In Iran, 16 women were killed in Kurdistan province during the year 2020 under the pretext of preserving family honor. In May 2020, a father killed her daughter with a machete because of his objection to her marriage without the consent of a person, which he considered in order to preserve the honor of the family, and in September 2021, it was just a flimsy suspicion that caused the killing of a 14-year-old girl at the hands of her husband and relatives in

the name of honor in the province of Lorestan, western Iran. It is worth noting that the absence of deterrent laws allows an increase in the level of honor crimes in Iranian society, for example The Islamic Penal Code eases punitive measures for fathers and family members who commit honor killings to receive a sentence of 3 to 10 years in prison instead of execution or payment of blood money in typical murder cases. However, the Women's Protection Law passed in January 2021 did not Provides any serious standards to protect it from crimes of domestic violence, especially honor crimes, and Iran is one of 4 countries that have not joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

11. We no longer need to repeat more of the narrative sentences in which we express our regret at the increase in crimes of physical abuse and sexual violence against women in the Middle East, because what we raise today goes beyond these usual phrases. As a result of violence within societies that are dominated by traditional patriarchy and patriarchy, and where the family cultural heritage prevents women from speaking openly about the violence they face in order to bear the pain and one of them in silence, and in this regard, estimates confirm that Egypt and Morocco are the countries where the phenomenon of sexual harassment is most prevalent in the Middle East.
12. The rate of harassment of women in Egypt was 90%, especially girls aged 17 to 28, according to a law estimate, the highest in the Middle East. This led the Egyptian Parliament to increase the penalty for sexual harassment in July 2021 to a felony instead of a misdemeanor. This comes in conjunction with a decision by the President of the Republic to amend the Penal Code to combat sexual harassment. and to increase the penalty for violators, as the penalty is 4 years for anyone who has been exposed to others in a public or private place or who has been subjected to sexual or pornographic acts, gestures or insinuations by reference, words or any other means. Between January and October 2021, there were approximately 85 incidents of harassment, including 8 cases of children under 5 years of age and 10 cases of children aged 6 to 12. Government estimates confirm that violence against women costs the Egyptian economy 6.15 billion pounds from health care spending to legal and production costs.

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Destroying Lives: Victims of Community Violence Still Searching for Justice

13. In Morocco, it will not be far behind, with 89% harassment of women, especially girls aged 17 to 28. For example, many Moroccan social media users have denounced the incident of harassment in Tangier, Morocco, in September 2021. A young man raised a girl's skirt and before he touched her body, his companion documented the scene with his phone. Activists considered the silence about this crime to be falling in front of sick minds. As such, a young man assaulted a Moroccan nurse in a hospital by sliding and severely beating Moroccan social media sites in an incident that many saw as continuing the culture of marginalized male domination of women within society, On the other hand, in Turkey, 1.5 per 100,000 persons are subjected to forced sexual assault.

يتعرض في تركيا 1.5
من كل 100 ألف
شخص لاعتداء جنسي
قسري ، بينما وصلت
نسبة التحرش بالنساء
داخل المغرب إلى 89%.

14. In Tunisia, the House of Peoples' Representatives, in the course of its plenary session, witnessed the attack by the President of the Dignity Coalition, Seifeddine Makhlouf, and his colleague, Sahbi Samara, of extreme violence against the leader of the Free Constitutional Party, Abir Moussi. Despite the fact that the Tunisian Parliament imposed the most severe punishment on the deputies, this incident makes clear the disturbing disregard for women and their rights. It makes it clear that even the masculine mindset continues to permeate even within the thinking of the ruling elites and Iran, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors were subjected to sexual harassment in the course of their work. The Iranian Government did not find it useful to justify the order as high security. On the other hand, in February 2021, women launched an online campaign to speak publicly about the manifestations of sexual harassment and abuse that they have been subjected to in defiance of conservative customs and a culture of shame, some of which show a plethora of testimonies that bear the same reality that women endure more violence than usual.

Female genital mutilation and early marriage are forms of violence that bind women from early childhood

15. In the Middle East, girls continue to suffer from the murder of their early childhood dreams and an attack on their innocent rights as early marriage and female circumcision increase, it is mainly based on a faulty cultural, social and religious legacy, often marked by widespread poverty and ignorance, especially in early marriages. It is estimated that at least 200 million women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 around the world are exposed to female genital mutilation. This is in addition to the marriage of more than 12 million girls under the age of 18, and these practices are on the rise in the Middle East and North Africa region, where misogynistic legacies of male domination are widespread.
16. In the meantime, the data indicate that the countries in which the marriage of minors is most prevalent in the Middle East are Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. In Yemen, about 14% of girls marry under the age of 15 and 52% of them marry when they are 18 years old. 8 minors live their lives daily due to the risks of pregnancy and childbirth associated with early marriage. In Syria, the percentage of underage marriage increased after the armed conflict that struck the country, reaching 14% of the group of girls, while it was 7% before the war.



17. In Iraq, the matter will not be much different, as the latest statistical estimates indicate that the percentage of married women at the age of 12 has risen to 53% of the percentage of women, and in Jordan about 29 underage girls are married daily. Some estimates also confirm that underage marriages rose to 11.8 during the period between 2019 And 2020. While in Turkey, Syrian families offered their daughters to marry at an early age due to financial need, especially in light of the spread of the Corona virus. In Egypt, the President of the Republic directed the speedy issuance of special legal legislation to combat the phenomenon of underage marriage, after government estimates showed that nearly 117 A thousand children in the age group from 10 to 17 years are married or have ever been married.

18. On the other hand, the phenomenon of female genital mutilation is an essential part of the fabric of societies in the Middle East region so far, and it increases sharply in areas that adhere to societal and religious customs and traditions. In Egypt, 92% of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone some form of female genital mutilation. In Yemen, circumcision is prevalent at 18.5% among women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49. In the Sudan, 86.6% of women and girls have been subjected to circumcision, particularly pharaoh. Estimates confirm that the cost of treating the health effects of female genital mutilation is estimated at about \$1.4 billion annually.

In summary, it can be said that the persistence of crimes of violence against women in the Middle East is caused mainly by the permeation of patriarchal culture and socio-cultural heritage based on false religious and moral perceptions. Thus, the effective treatment of social violence issues in the Middle East begins with the correction of concepts based on male family practices derived from religion, customs and traditions. On the other hand, a major part of violent crime is associated with poverty and economic vulnerability, especially in early marriage. Therefore, governments, along with international bodies, must provide social protection programs for families suffering from extreme poverty.



Recommendations:

- To International Organizations: The need to assist Governments to incorporate long-term plans to eliminate violence against women, particularly in relation to the false religious and community traditions and customs. On the other hand, civil society organizations must be strengthened and funding problems addressed in order to enable them to carry out their work.
- To the governments of countries in the Middle East: The penalties for crimes of violence against women, especially honor crimes, should be tightened, with the amendment of existing laws that allow perpetrators of crimes of violence against women to go unpunished, with the need to conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the seriousness of gender-based violence in particular on the lives of women. This is in addition to correcting wrong religious and societal concepts about violence issues.
- To Civil Society Organizations: The need to intensify awareness-raising campaigns on gender-based violence and to strengthen various mechanisms to empower women to address it.
- To the leaders and clergy: The need to correct the misconceptions associated with the prevalence of gender-based violence such as female genital mutilation and honor killings.

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