

Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq

منظمة حرية المرأة في العراق

Al- Fardawse Square Area – Al Za'im Street – Next to Al Saadoun Private Hospital

Tel no. 011 964 17 170953

العراق- بغداد

قرب ساحة الفردوس- شارع الزعيم – جوار مستشفى السعدون الأهلي

We want the same rights that women enjoy in other countries

Appeal by the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq regarding 8th March 05- International Women's Day

Women and women's organizations worldwide are preparing to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8. The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq is also preparing itself inside Iraq and abroad to celebrate IWD.

We congratulate women in Iraq and worldwide on this great day and call on women and men in Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan to hold celebrations on this day.

Women in Iraq have not struggled to get rid of the Baath regime (one of the most dreadful regimes humanity has ever known) only to be jailed in their homes, will-less, deprived of basic rights, threatened with death if they express an opinion or exercise their rights.

This is what has happened to Iraqi women since the recent war. Since the US occupation began, the political Islamists (both Sunni and Shia) have been unleashed to work "freely" and launch a new attack on the rights of women in Iraq. It is an attack which sustains and deepens the violations of women's rights in Iraq which the fascist Baath regime was engaged in for more than three decades and came to a point where women were beheaded in public places in front of their children and families.

These Islamic movements have made wearing the hijab compulsory for women at the point of a gun, violating a woman's basic right to choose what she wears. Many of the Baath regime's laws are still in place. Polygamy and pleasure marriage (which is an organized form of prostitution and allows white slave traffic) is widespread practice.

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Thousands of women have been killed. Millions are confined to their homes and prevented from attending schools, work or going about their daily lives and doing things like walking, shopping and going out to enjoy some recreational places.

There are an unprecedented number of so-called honor killings. The Iraqi Interim Government has turned a blind eye to these crimes. Shocking though it may sound, Killing women is not a crime in “liberated” Iraq.

The forces which created the current unbearable situation for women for last two years are the same forces which are backed by the US and given enormous resources and influence to write new laws and to decide the rights of women in the coming "parliament".

These forces will be the forces which will institutionalise sexual discrimination against women under the name of implementing “Islamic Sharia” law. They will dedicate their courts and institutions to oppressing women and will treat us as inferior citizens.

This is a danger to all women! Our rights, freedoms, safety and security are at stake!

Now that we are only days away from celebrating the 8th March, we have to unite our ranks to make this day a day where women and men in Iraq can come together to defend women's rights and struggle for their freedom and equality with men.

We must unite our ranks to bring about laws which put women and men on an equal footing in all fields.

Let's raise the demands (alongside women around the world) for an end to discrimination against women, an end to killing and terrorism against us.

Let's make the 8th of March a day to unite women all over Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan with women worldwide in the struggle to extend women's rights to include

* the right to work

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- * the right to education
- * the right to choose one's place of residency
- * the right to live safely and securely, to be protected against domestic violence
- * the right to choose a partner without coercion or threat
- * the right to travel without imposing companions on us

Let's make 8th March a day to escalate our demand for an end to US occupation and an end to Islamic terrorism, to legislate a secular constitution in Iraq which separates religion from the state and to implement modern civil laws on all residents of Iraq, regardless of their gender, ethnicity and religion.

Let's hold gathering in every village, suburb, city, school, university and working place where women and men celebrate the IWD to make women's voices heard. We demand a free and equal world!

Let's make this day a day of resolve to continue the struggle to materialize our demands and use all available means to turn these demands into rights that women can enjoy on a daily basis, similar to the rights now enjoyed by women in many countries.

Join us; join the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, the courageous voice of women and the real defender of their rights in Iraq.

Join us in the struggle for equality and freedom and for a civil and secular society in Iraq.

Long live the 8th March!

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February 3, 2005

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