



Komalên Jinên Kurdistan

Let's build our spaces of freedom against the pandemic of masculine violence!

All around the world we witness a rise in annihilation attacks against women, with the aim of suppressing and undermining our pursuit for freedom. This dreadful increase in violence against women is directly related to the crisis of the patriarchal capitalist system. This system continues its existence mostly by exploiting women; the crisis and chaotic situation created by this system poses a great danger to women and all societies. In order to break the rising women's consciousness and struggle, we face new waves of attacks. It is more essential than ever for the women of the world to develop a common resistance strategy; against this system that is trying to maximise profits from the condition and environment created by the Covid-19 outbreak.

As the Kurdistan Women's Freedom Movement, that has organised in the legacy of the universal women's struggle for thousands of years, we consider ourselves as part of the global women's movement, and give ourselves responsibilities that go beyond the borders of Kurdistan. From the secluded places of the world we gain enormous morale from women's organisation and resistance; and we know that the freedom struggle we have raised in our own lands gives strength and inspiration to our sisters thousands of miles away. This is true for all local women's struggles. At our current stage, the honourable struggle for women's freedom and equality is rising wave by wave from our localities to create an ocean. A wind that blows on one side of the world can create a wave or a flood in another part of the world. The energy within local women's struggles is immense and we call the organised state of this the Democratic World Women's Confederalism - and this intimidates the global patriarchal system.

Women's freedom constitutes the historical antithesis of masculine exploitation. Since the women's problem constitutes the stem cell of all social problems, the social entity within the ruling system that has the deepest structural contradictions is also the woman. Women's liberation is therefore the only area where all the knots can be resolved, that is to say, the problem of freedom can evolve into a real solution. The fact that the crisis of capitalist modernity reflects itself mostly over the dilemma of women's freedom and slavery is directly related to this truth. Likewise, the fact that the global patriarchal system is fighting systematically to attack women is related to this same reality.

The misogynist attacks have increased to the level of annihilation today. The examples and implementation of these are increasing daily. All over the world children and women are exposed to violent and deadly attacks by men, state forces and gangs. In fact, the major pandemic subsisting as misogyny and masculine violence, has never been as visible at any stage in history as now. Therefore, to transform and gain results, firstly as women, but also as general society we must focus on struggling against the pandemic of misogyny, sourced from the patriarchal virus, namely the masculine mindset. Our struggle and organisation must serve to strengthen women on one hand, and to weaken and overcome the patriarchal mentality on the other. We urgently need to develop methods of struggle that will provide this both indirectly and directly. We should not forget that social liberation is only possible with a mental revolution. Therefore, we have a duty to target the patriarchal mentality in a consistent, radical and systematic way.

This mindset is essentially misogynistic. At this point, where women's pursuit of freedom, consciousness, struggle and organisation are on the rise, they try to secure its existence by developing counter-attacks. These new measures, which have led to a significant increase in violence against women, cannot be explained only under the conditions created by the Covid-19 pandemic; rather, there is an endeavour to benefit from the fact that the position of the woman becomes more fragile under pandemic prohibitions and quarantine conditions. Otherwise, if we attribute the increase itself to pandemic conditions, we will assume a reduction in violence against women with the end of the pandemic, which would be a serious mistake. Identifying the source of the problem is the first step in developing a solution. Conditions are variable, but what is constant is the masculine mindset that consistently seeks opportunity. In this respect, we need to see not only the pandemic, but also how the extraordinary time and conditions in general are used by this mindset to carry out crimes against women.

The attacks against the Kurdish Women's Freedom Struggle, which inspires its sisters around the world with its resistance, organisation and leadership of revolutionary struggle, exemplifies this reality. Specifically in Rojava, where the torch of the women's revolution is raised, we face counter attacks that aim to annihilate the construction of the democratic system. This time, not under the name of ISIS, but directly by the fascist Turkish state and its Islamic mercenaries; and with the explicit or implicit support and approval of the patriarchal inter-state order!

These fascist attacks on women who play a leading role in the revolution were repeated the night before yesterday in Kobanê. Members of the local co-ordination of Kongreya Star, the umbrella organisation of the Kurdish women's movement in Rojava, were visiting a village belonging to Kobanê when the Turkish army carried out an attack on them. Three Kurdish women were murdered in this targeted attack with an armed drone. The Turkish state, which after occupying the cities of Afrin, Serêkaniyê [Ras al-Ayn] and Girê Spî [Tell Abyad] and is now preparing to launch an occupation attack on Kobanê, has deliberately set women as its target. This is because Kobanê is the city where the IS was beaten for the first time under the leadership of women. Kobanê symbolises the women's revolution. Kobanê, as a city of resistance, has given hope and faith to all peoples of the world with its historical resistance against the IS. When we consider that the airspace over Kobanê is under Russian control, it becomes clear that the Turkish state conducts its war crimes and crimes against humanity with the approval of misogynist state forces.

Another place where the colonialist Turkish regime concentrates its misogynistic war crimes is the city of Afrin, which represents the western edge of Rojava and northern Syria. Afrin is a place of great symbolic value for the Rojava women's revolution. The co-chair system was first implemented here, the YPJ declared its establishment here and the first women's defence martyr fell here. At the start of 2018, when the Turkish army invaded Afrin with NATO's tanks and ISIS gangs, neither the International Coalition nor the UN or Russia stood against this. Ethnic cleansing was carried out in Afrin city and its surrounding villages which had a population that was almost completely Kurdish at that time. While Kurdish was forbidden, Turkish and Arabic were declared as the official languages, while Umayyad Islamic interpretation dominated and Sharia was declared. While the vast majority of the people of Afrin internally migrated and became displaced peoples, those that did not leave their homes are struggling to survive under the terrorist regime. This situation is not only prevalent in Afrin, but in all cities in Northern Syria that the Turkish state has invaded and colonised.

We are aware that it is no coincidence that crimes against women, carried out by the Turkish state and its mercenaries are systematically happening in Afrin, in order to turn the symbolic city of the women's revolution into a symbolic city of women's slavery. Beside ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide, crimes against women are implemented. Kurdish women and young girls are kidnapped, imprisoned, raped, sold into slavery in different cities and murdered bodies are left in lands by Islamo-fascist gangs paid by Ankara (most

likely with the EU so-called 'refugee aid' money given to Turkey). The crimes against women that we are exposed to in occupied cities in Rojava and Northern Syria are NATO and UN approved Turkish colonies, no different to what ISIS did. The fact that the forces that try to justify and legitimise their intervention in Afghanistan, based on women's rights, remain silent against the crimes committed on women under the control of the Turkish state, reveals the NATO powers complicity and true intentions.

Crimes against women are carried out within the boundaries of the Turkish state, in line with the same concept, but with intensified means and methods. The Turkish state took power from Covid-19 curfews that prohibited mass gatherings, and appointed trustees to the municipalities of Kurdish cities that had a co-chair system in place and arrested co-mayors. By bringing impunity to violent perpetrators of sexual violence and releasing them from prison under the name of 'corona forgiveness' and the 'marry your rapist' legislation. Women who take a stand and struggle against this are criminalised and arrested. Nowhere in the world are women kept hostage as political prisoners like in Turkey. From elected deputies to co-mayors, from civil society activists to peace mothers; hundreds or even thousands of women who took part in political and social activities in Turkey, are imprisoned for their speeches and thoughts. Since the Turkish state knows that the social resistance against the fascist regime is thought by women, it tries to intimidate and extort women, through threats, oppression, violence, detention and arrests. They not only do it directly with their own forces, but beside the social, political and economic crisis environments they have created, they promote all forms of violence against women with its racist, militarist misogynistic rhetoric and policies. As a result, in Northern Kurdistan and Turkey there is an increase in murders of women and suspicious suicides.

The fascist Turkish state, which knows no borders in its attacks against Kurds and women, concentrates its genocidal military attacks on Southern Kurdistan (Northern Iraq). In general since 2007, but especially in the last 5 years, the Turkish military is carrying out its air attacks on Southern Kurdistan more and more viciously. Most recently, dozens of Turkish war planes have simultaneously carried out air raids on Shengal [Sinjar], the homeland of the Yezidis [Yazidi], the refugee camp Maxmûr [Makhmour] with 12 thousand inhabitants and the Meder defence areas in the night of June 14. The people of Zhengal and Maxmûr have not yet overcome the trauma of the IS attacks of August 2014 and are now facing genocidal attacks by the Turkish state. The cross-border air attacks of the Turkish state, which constitute war crimes, would not and cannot be carried out without the consent of NATO. For this reason, besides Turkey, the whole of NATO, especially the USA is guilty and responsible. While 5 civilians have been murdered during the current wave of attacks by Turkey, these Turkish air raids have a particularly negative influence on women. Hundreds of mountain villages have already been evacuated because of the attacks and their inhabitants have been forced to flee to the city. Women who actively participate in production in their villages through agriculture and herding live an isolated life due to the eviction to the city. This in turn makes the political, economic and social situation, which has now taken the form of a crisis in Southern Kurdistan, even more difficult for women. As a result, domestic violence against women is increasing quickly and we can see an increase in feminicides and suspicious suicides.

The situation in Eastern Kurdistan (Iran) is similar. The anti-women conservative policy of the Iranian state, which is not able to cope with the current situation, leads to a constant deepening of the crisis. This in turn leads to a social and economic crisis. While the current crisis situation in Iran affects all ethnic and religious groups in the country, Kurds are confronted with more systematic and concentrated attacks. The Iranian state supports Turkish air attacks on Southern Kurdistan with mortar and grenade shelling. Moreover, the Iranian army has deployed its forces in the border area with Iraq, which is Kurdish territory, and has started a new military operation. This new operation against Kurds comes at a time when Iran is in distress in its competition for the Middle Eastern hegemony against the USA

and its population is struggling with the Covid-19 virus and a deep economic crisis. This in turn is affecting women in the form of increased violence and feminicide.

The crimes against women that we face in Kurdistan are carried out in a similar way all over the world. At the global level, there is a significant increase in violence against women, specifically domestic violence. It is also possible to see with the increase in calls to helplines created for women who have been subjected to domestic violence. With the Covid-19 epidemic, domestic violence helpline calls in Lebanon increased by 100 percent. This rate has increased to 142 percent in Colombia. During the period between March and May, when the quarantine was in force in Mexico, 2,338 victims of domestic violence called for help (the number of women calling the helpline in the same period in 2019 was 735). Similarly there is a serious increase observed in sexual assaults, especially against girls. During the two-month quarantine in Colombia, 2,338 girls under the age of 14 were exposed to sexual violence and rape. These are only the reported numbers on records and the reality is much higher.

The increase in crimes against women throughout the world feeds directly and indirectly from nationalism, sexism, religion and science that capitalist modernity is based on. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that racism and fascism are rising in line with sexist attacks. In this context, white supremacy and state violence, which has been carried out for hundreds of years against black people in the USA is structurally institutionalised, thus so reckless today. Precisely for this reason, it is necessary to build alliances to struggle for women's freedom, carried out in an anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-colonial form. Along with this, militaristic, armed individuals and non-state actors are increasingly infiltrating the living spaces of people, with direct implications on the livelihoods of women and children. Efforts to increase sexual exploitation by legitimising prostitution, based on a false sense of freedom, constitutes another dimension of crimes against women. Again, it should be understood within this framework that women who are restricted into the informal sector, that lack any kind of security, are prone to attack and exploitation. From a broad perspective, it is obvious that manifold crimes against women are carried out and the male dominant mindset tries to gain benefit from the conditions brought by the Covid-19 pandemic.

With these developments, how will we respond to the systematic attacks of war we face as women, how will we defend ourselves, how will we oppose it, how will we organize the resistance? This is the point we need to focus on right now and our diligence and assessments should serve this. Otherwise, if we focus only on the attacks and see the current situation only through crimes against women, we can be left in despair. However, one of the reasons why the patriarchal system has become so aggressive is because of our rising struggle that is strengthening women. We are not the weakest link, on the contrary, we are the social power that challenges the global system the most!

By being aware of our own power and the age we live in, we can stand against the ideological, political, economic, military, physical and spiritual attacks of the global patriarchal-capitalist system, that aims to intimidate, retain and subjugate us. We can further weaken them and make the struggle for women's freedom a practical subject for the 21st century women's revolutionary age. This is not said for the sake of it, but in this age, with the colours of women's freedom, ecology and democracy we should ensure the women's revolution. As their aggression proves this, we must remember that revolutionary processes need fierce struggle and resistance. We are already in a process of fierce struggle therefore our opposition must be accordingly fierce in nature.

The system aims to individualise, divide and isolate us because they know very well that we, as women, gain our strength from our unity, solidarity and organisation. Therefore not a single woman should be alone or walk alone, starting from local embracing, supporting, and defending each other is the first step.

Secondly, we must transform our networks into organised structures. With the consciousness that the path of freedom passes through organisation, we should solve all

the problems we experience; from health to economy, from law to politics, from society to culture, from the press to sports, from family to country, and develop solutions based on our self-power and self-organisation. Regardless of the problem, our main goal should be to develop solutions with the collective mind and consciousness of women. With each challenge that we overcome, we will further strengthen ourselves individually and collectively and weaken the male-dominant system that tries to subjugate us.

Thirdly, we should aim at the patriarchal mentality in the fight against the male-dominated system, as it is this mentality that reproduces violence. We cannot secure our achievements without transforming this mentality that is prevalent in all spheres and social textures of life through its power relations. Therefore, we must analyse the ruling masculine mentality in depth, analyse how it has been systematised, bring its codes consciousness, and build our radical self-defense force against it. We should never accept it, we must disclose, expose and isolate it. As women, we should raise awareness for ourselves and our surroundings collectively. In this direction we should create training and action plans. We must make the patriarchal mentality unacceptable to women and society. In doing so, we must also see its firm connection to nationalism, racism, sexism, religionism, colonialism, and resist by creating the mentality of freedom.

Fourth; as a women's group, organisation or movement we should build our own system based on a liberatory mentality. Building a democratic autonomous system of women will mean making this liberatory mentality viable. With a common building of autonomous structures based on democratic confederalism, without weakening the local uniqueness and by not creating centralist structures, it can marginalise the ruling state powers. In order to narrow the domain of the dominant system, we must expand our areas of freedom. As we grow, they become smaller, as we become stronger, they become weaker, as we expand, they diminish.

It's exactly the time for this! The patriarchal attacks against women who seek emancipation do not deter from this. Let's turn every area of life into a struggle against patriarchal mentality and its system. Hand in hand lets stand against all forms of violence. The chain we would create by bringing our hands together can create a wall against sexism, racism and colonialism. Through our liberatory mentality we can build our democratic world women's confederalism. We can do this, it's time for it! By historically carrying out the second largest women's revolution all over the world we can demolish the male dominant system from Kurdistan to Minneapolis, from Ciudad Juarez to Kandahar, from Kharrtoun to Madrid!

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(Komalên Jinên Kurdistan - Communities of Women from Kurdistan)