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Al-Nisa

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October 2007

Honour Based Violence Forum - A New Middle East Centre Project

Banaz Babakir's 'Honour' Killing Case

Updates on the recent UK's policies

International Campaign Against Honour Killing & Violence against Women

Together for Women's Rights in Iraq



Al-Nisa 11

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Editorial Word

Together we are stronger



Nadia Mahmood

First of all I am so delighted to see after 10 issues of producing Al-Nisa, magazine, two women, one from Sudan and the other from the United States of America, worked hard and quietly together to produce this issue of Al-Nisa, I send them a big hug and a big thank you.

The second point is that the whole issue of the killing of Banaz and the following trial was a tragedy, however the remarkable work of all women organisations who tirelessly and continuously worked in the last few months to bring 'The Justice for Banaz', showed that Banaz's name and life will not go unmentioned. In July, the Old Bailey really did achieve justice to Banaz and other "honour" killing victims by sentencing Banaz's father and uncle to life imprisonment! We think this should be every perpetrator's fate if they killed their own flesh and blood.

The Middle East Centre for Women's Rights has formed a forum called Combating Honour Based Violence Forum (CHBVF) to bring together all those women's organisations who work with victims of what is called "honour" killing. We want the forum to become stronger by inviting more organisations to join its membership and to say "No to Honour Killings" and "together we're stronger".

While Banaz's grave left unidentified, unnamed, carried no sign of who she was, the CHBVF found at last her resting place, invited the police, the prosecution service and women's organisations who showered it with flowers, surrounded it with candles, and put words on it saying "We will not let it be repeated."

Now, the discussion around founding an Award called Banaz Award or Banaz Foundation, has been going on for a while, this is to be awarded Annually to a VAW Organisation or a very active individual who make significant changes to women's lives in their community.

Last thing, on a letter I received from my sister in the States, she was saying, "we will open a new organisation in California State, we have learned from Middle Eastern women in UK and we would like to do something in the States, we will make a new history."

Our women are in action in making this history.

Hope to have enjoyable and fruitful reading..

Nadia Mahmood
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October 2007

A Seminar to Raise Awareness on 'Honour' Killings for Professionals in Southwark

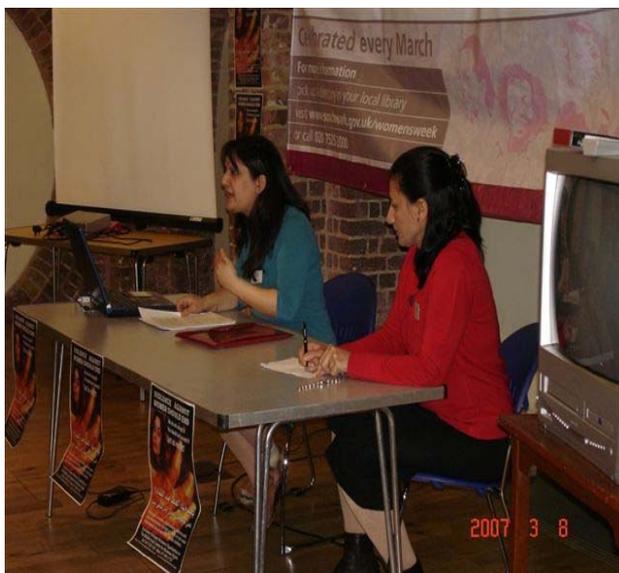
Middle East Centre for Women's Rights in partnership with the Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organisation and Southwark Council organised a seminar entitled: *The Background and Dimensions of "Honour" Based Violence Facing Middle Eastern Women in Southwark* as part of International Women's Week. The seminar took place in InSpire, the crypt at St. Peter's in Liverpool Grove on Thursday the 8th of March 2007. Many people attended the event, especially women from various organisations, making it a great success. The seminar included various speeches and a useful exercise to practice newly learned skills. A synopsis of the seminar as follows.

Nadia Mahmood, Coordinator of the Middle East Centre for Women's Rights (MECWR) welcomed the crowd and congratulated the women on their international day and thanked them for coming to the event.

Speech by Gona Saed

Gona Saed, a representative from the Middle East Centre for Women's Rights, gave an overview of the plethora of issues facing Middle Eastern women in both their communities in the Middle East and culturally influenced communities here in the UK. Gona explained that unfair or gender-biased legislation, gender-biased justice systems, the presence of police and other armed

forces, changes in political and economic situations, influence of religious, cultural and traditional values, and the counter-action to threats posed by women's rights movements often allow women's rights to be breached. These violations occur under problematic precepts that women are considered holders of family's "honour" and are not independent, allowing for discrimination against women on many levels. Women are to be submissive to their male "owners", take a secondary role in family matters, and to forfeit personal



human rights in order to favour cultural obligations to be "decent women". Failure to comply with these prescribed standards often leads to honour based violence (HBV), such as rape, disfigurement, female genital mutilation or murder.

Justifications for HBV range from sexual activity before or outside of marriage and extra-religious dating, to inappropriate dress or laughing too much. Gona pointed out that the acceptability and frequency of HBV differs from country to country, and some countries' legislature, such as that in Iraq and Jordan, provides immunity for perpetrators of crimes done to promote family honour. She outlined various steps to protect women from HBV. Among these are: criminalisation of forms of HBV, changes in assumptions regarding multiculturalism, strict laws to prevent HBV, education in schools, empowering women, campaigning

against violence, more networking and liaising between members of the social service sector (health, police) and greater investment in raising awareness about human rights of women amongst the communities.

Speech by Marion Greer

Marion Greer, a representative from Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organisation (KRWO), spoke about the organisational goals to create awareness amongst the public, government, local authorities, police and other statutory bodies about the heinous crimes committed against Kurdish and Middle Eastern women on the grounds of tradition, culture and religion. Marion affirmed that the work of KRWO is integral in a social climate where Kurdish-refugees are suffering or have suffered severe human rights abuses and infringement on their personal freedoms, saying that many women arrive from Kurdistan traumatized by the experience of fleeing for their lives, and having lost all their possessions, sometimes their children and family members. They often have no knowledge of English, and no knowledge that in this country they are entitled to equal treatment with men, as well as rights that entitle them not to be assaulted, locked up, or abused. KRWO seeks to address these issues by empowering Kurdish and Arabic refugee women through education, support and social integration, familiarizing them with their rights, advocating for these rights, and providing assistance and advice.

Speech by J. Muhammed

"J. Muhammad told her story as an Iraqi woman who came to London with her Iraqi/British husband. As a recently arrived immigrant with no recourse to public funds or other resources, she was forced to deal with escalating domestic abuse, both emotional and physical, on her own. She recalled instances of strangling and degrading verbal comments, but received no help or protection from the police in the face of her abusive and alcoholic husband. J insists that "prevention is better than cure" and that access to public funds for new immigrants is a cheaper and more effective way to deal with these problems. She calls on the greater community to end misfortunes such as her own, by amending the current immigration law, increasing the punishment for perpetrators of domestic abuse, the checking of police records for men who wish to marry abroad, the provision of information on rights to newly arrived wives, and social service support to victims of domestic abuse.



Surma Hameed, a representative from KRWO, talked about her own experience with domestic violence when she was in Kurdistan and how she bravely battled against it. She didn't surrender to the violence and different types of abuse perpetrated against her

by her family and her ex-husband. However, she went to search for and work with women's rights organisations in Arbil in Kurdistan, Iraq. She worked to empower women and carried on working even after her application for asylum in Britain. Surma continues working for women's rights in London and through her work with KRWO. When she reflects on her past experiences and whether she was a victim or a heroine she is convinced that she was a heroine. The delegates were delighted with this brave woman's presentation and how she stood firm against violence and her perpetrators and her continued activism to empower other domestic violence women sufferers.

Combating 'Honour' Based Violence Forum A new Project for the Middle East Centre for Women's Rights



Gona Saed

The Combating Honour Based Violence Forum was formed by a network of women's rights organisations to strengthen their voice in the quest to end honour based violence in the United Kingdom. The Forum has its roots in the tragic murder of Banaz Mahmod Babakir Agha. Banaz, a 20 year old Kurdish woman, disappeared in early 2006 and found dead months later reminds the English community that honour based violence is a continuing problem, even here in the UK. Both her uncle and her father are involved in her murder in the name of honour.

The Forum is comprised of various women's rights organisations from all over London.

The following organisations have been involved so far in its activities:

Middle East Centre for Women's Rights, Kurdistan Refugee Women Organisation, Forward, Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, IMKAAN, International Campaign Against Honour Killing, Iraqi Women League, Southall Black Sisters, Newham Asian Women Project, Eaves Housing for Women, and ASHIANA Network.

The Forum also seeks partnerships with other community actors such as the Women's Resource Centre, Refugee Council, the social service sector, and members of the police force. The overall aims and objectives of CHBVF are

numerous and it seeks to address the problem of "honour" violence on many levels. In the political sphere, the forum aims to influence positive change in policies in favour of women under risk of honour based crimes and influence the government and other funders to support services that are helping at risk women.

The Forum engages in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about women's human rights amongst isolated communities as well as wider society. The Forum seeks to bring perpetrators to justice and put an end to any justification of honour based murders and also reduce the threat of honour based crimes amongst women and young girls.

Lastly, the Forum provides a venue and vessel for empowerment for women to enjoy their human rights, their dignity and self esteem.

The forum consists of two types of members. Firstly, full members are representatives of grassroots organisations involved in women rights, human rights and/or community issues.

They will have the responsibility to attend meetings, take part in activities agreed by the forum and contribute to decision making. Secondly, associate members make up those who support the Forum. These members could be invited to attend meetings relevant to their expertise.

The forum meets on a two month basis and has established terms of reference as well as outlined its key activities in the areas of education, awareness promotion, and advocacy.

The Forum has also supported various organisational campaigns since its existence. Such as 'Justice For Banaz' and 'No Recourse to Public Funds' campaigns. For more information about the forum and its membership please call Gona on 02077012206 or email her on: gona@mecwr.org and for membership forms please go to website: www.mecwr.org

Banaz Babikir Court Cast



By: Jonanne Payton

Banaz Mahmud, a 20 year old Kurdish girl living in London disappeared towards the end of January 2006, and her corpse was found in April. She had been strangled with a bootlace which had been left around her throat, and her young body had been crammed into a suitcase which was buried in a garden in Birmingham, the grave marked only by a pile of old furniture. Police and the CPS were quick to categorise this crime an 'honour' killing,

masterminded by Banaz's own father, Mahmud Mahmud, and her uncle Ari Mahmud, and carried out by a number of Kurdish men, of whom one (Mohamad Hama) has pleaded guilty and two others remain at large, suspected to be fugitives from justice in Iraqi Kurdistan. Calling this murder an 'honour killing' was not an imaginative leap based in islamophobic prejudice but an understanding based on the statements from the victim herself. According to Banaz, this was not the first attempt on her life in the name of 'honour'. She had voiced her fears to the police on previous occasions, naming those men now standing in the dock at the Old Bailey. The question that this poses, say the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO) is seeing as the police of her situation, could her death have been avoided?

Diana Nammi, the founder of IKWRO has appeared at many conferences and seminars presenting guidance for public sector workers who relate to women of Kurdish and Iranian background to spread awareness of the issues of 'honour' and the oppression and violence that is carried out in its name. Her three main points are: be aware, be ready, and most importantly, *believe*. Potential victims of 'honour'-related violence must be treated with sensitivity, their fears must be taken seriously, agencies must be ready to provide support and protection and all individuals must be aware of the issue of 'honour' as it affects the lives of women from minority communities and what Jasvinder Sanghera calls the 'One Chance Rule.' Potential victims of 'honour' crime may only have a single chance to make their fears known; the response must be immediate and effective. Women from IKWRO and other NGOs have been attending the ongoing trial in the Old Bailey in order to evaluate their responses while they still had the power to intervene and potentially save her life

On New Year's Eve 2005, Banaz police were called to a café in Hartsfield Road where Banaz was found lying on the floor, visibly intoxicated. Banaz was in an extremely agitated, even violent state: she was extremely concerned for the safety of Rehmat Suleimani, her lover, whom she believed was also at risk of murder and claimed to have herself escaped a murder attempt. PC Angela Corne who attended the scene characterized Banaz as melodramatic and manipulative from the outset, and was more concerned about charging Banaz for the damage she had made to her next-door neighbour's window rather than attempting to appreciate her situation and to understand her story. Medical staff at the hospital describe Banaz as 'petrified'; however PC Cornes chose in her testimony to describe Banaz as violence.



violent without attempting to understand her emotional state. While individual attitudes and prejudices cannot be legislated for, there are areas in which PC Corne's response may have been more appropriate with the benefit of greater awareness of 'honour' crime: for example, when Banaz claimed that her father had been trying to kill her and also that she was facing threats from four men, this was taken by PC Corne as evidence of inconsistency and exaggeration.

However, a greater knowledge of the system of 'honour' would have taught PC Corne that this supposed inconsistency was in fact evidence in favour of Banaz's claim; 'honour' killings are typically made by a conspiracy of elder males who decide and plan the murder of the offending female. If she had been aware of this, she may have listened to Banaz with a more sympathetic ear; Banaz had four uncles, and it was these same four uncles that summoned her sister Bekhal to a meeting in 2003 where she was told by Ari Mahmud Babakir Agha: "If I was your father you would have been turned to ashes by now." It is common in Kurdish regions for women to commit suicide by self-immolation, and so many 'honour' killings are disguised by this mechanism. Bekhal eventually left her family to find security and freedom with foster parents although she herself was violently assaulted by her brother in an attack which she claims was motivated by family honour.

When PC Corne spoke to Rehmat about Banaz's drunken state, which Banaz claimed was because she was forced to drink an entire bottle of brandy by her father' Rehmat says he doubts this because Mahmud Mahmud is a 'strict Muslim.'

PC Corne does not take the obvious opportunity to ask whether Mr Mahmud is also a strict parent; in fact she her questions to Rehmat are never made in order to verify Banaz's story, but only to discredit it. For PC Corne, Banaz's drunken state is yet again a reason to disbelieve her: yet the fact that Banaz has

alcohol in her life before was stated by Banaz herself and confirmed by Rehmat. PC Corne does not give Banaz benefit of the doubt because she is intoxicated for the first time in her life and claims to be in severe danger; instead she attempts to read manipulative intent into Banaz's drunken body-language.

Procedurally, PC Corne fails to follow up on a serious allegation: she doesn't make a referral to the Domestic Violence Unit; she doesn't look for any background information (such as the recorded 'honour'-related attack on Banaz's sister Bekhal); she didn't consult with any individual or group with knowledge of minority cultures, such as IKWRO or any other minority women's group; she contacts the family directly to resolve the broken window issue without considering whether this is appropriate in the light of Banaz's serious allegation; she makes a perfunctory follow-up visit at a time when Banaz's father is present in the house in which the intention is more to clear up the matter of the broken window mere lip-service given to her personal safety.

The last person to see Banaz alive was Alison Way at Mitcham Police Station on 23rd January 2006. Banaz and her lover Rehmat Suleimani had both arranged to give statements on that day as they had both become aware of



what they felt was a plot by Ari Mahmud threatening both their lives. On the previous day, a Mohamad Hama and some other Kurdish men had attempted to kidnap

Rehmat in Hounslow who said they would kill both of the young couple, adding "We are Muslim and Kurdish. We are not like the English where you can be boyfriend and girlfriend."

The officer taking Banaz's statement said that as a mother herself she could hardly understand this sort of threat, and then offered her a safe house which Banaz refused, saying that as long as her mother was in the house she was safe.

While the officer's response was kindly and the offer of a safe house entirely appropriate, she did not try to persuade Banaz to accept protection, to encourage her to consider her fears more seriously, nor invite her to contemplate circumstances under which she could lose her mother's protection.

Her comment about her own children on one level is humanizing and doubtless well-intended but on another hand it could be read as incredulity especially in the aftermath of PC Corne's offhand dismissal of Banaz's fears. This was the Met's last chance. Banaz was murdered on the following day. The 'Justice for Banaz' campaign will ask the London Met to make a full enquiry into such failures to protect Banaz Mahmud and to enact procedures and training to ensure that these failures are not repeated. There are lives in the balance and these failures which cost the life of a young woman may be partially redeemed if they are never repeated. Please support the campaign: you can find more details and a link to the online petition at www.ikwro.org.uk.

The Police's Failed Response to a potential 'Honour Killing



Press by: Sawsan Salim On behalf of KRWO & MECWR

In an article of the Times Newspaper dated Thursday, May 3rd 2007, on the murder trial of Banaz Mahmud, it was reported that a junior police officer, Constable Angela Cornes, was instructed by her senior, Detective Inspector Caroline Goode, to omit parts of her statement. This omission called into question the character of Banaz, a 20 year old Kurdish woman murdered in January of 2006, indicating that Banaz was not facing a real threat of potential violence and that her repeated claims that her father and uncle were trying to kill her for bringing shame on her family, were not well-founded.

When PC Corne spoke to Rehmat about Banaz's drunken state, which Banaz claimed was because she was forced to drink an entire bottle of brandy by her father, Rehmat says he doubts this because Mahmud Mahmud is a 'strict Muslim.' PC Corne does not take the obvious opportunity to ask

whether Mr Mahmud is also a strict parent; in fact her questions to Rehmat are never made in order to verify Banaz's story, but only to discredit it. For PC Corne, Banaz's drunken From the Court reports it is clear that Ms. Cornes who responded to Banaz's call for help at a café in Wimbledon, did not believe that her father had attacked her. Instead the police officer decided that Banaz made the whole story up to get her boyfriend to visit her at the hospital where she was being treated for cuts even though she told Ms. Cornes that her father had plied her with brandy and was trying to kill her. In fact the police officer seems more intent on arresting Banaz for breaking a neighbour's window to escape from her father, than taking her allegations of violence seriously. Had the police investigated her allegations further, perhaps she would be alive today.

This incident is a strong reminder, if one was needed, that some police officers are still not properly trained to deal with cultural issues, domestic violence and 'honour' killing, particularly where Middle Eastern Kurdish communities are concerned. We feel compelled to ask this question - How many more young Kurdish women and girls must be murdered before the police take the threat of 'honour' killing seriously?

Concerning Ms. Goode, it is appalling how a person in her position can so flagrantly break the law with apparent impunity and at the cost of a young woman's life. As pointed out by the trial's prosecutor, Victor Temple, QC, Ms. Cornes had exercised poor judgment and displayed ignorance in concluding that Banaz was simply a drunken young woman making false claims. We all hope that this negligence will not re-occur and that the police force will take women's claims more seriously, contributing the necessary resources needed to combat this kind of violence: Sawsan.s@ukonline.co.uk

Interview with; Diana Nammi



Al-Nisa has had pleasure in interviewing Diana Nammi, the Coordinator of Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)

Al-Nisa: Banaz's murderers including her father and uncle were found guilty by the jury on Monday 11th of June. Are you satisfied by the trial's proceedings? Do you think women's male relatives would have to think twice before they think of 'honour' killings or this verdict wouldn't make a difference to women's lives?

Diana: We were satisfied with the trial and the investigation of the crime, very much appreciating the lengths to which the police went to prove the murderers guilt. It was very positive to see that they used methods that you would more expect to see in the detection of serious organised crime, with witness protection schemes, covert recordings, using a helicopter to track the burial place. In our view, this is how honour crime needs to be treated: police and other parties must recognise the seriousness of the organised and collective nature of these crimes.

We certainly hope that men will think twice before committing 'honour' crimes, but we can't assume that that will happen. As an ideology, 'honour' has a tight hold over the minds of some parts of the community and they

may decide that this concept must be defended at any cost: we may see that more minors are encouraged to commit 'honour' killing, or more forced suicides, following the pattern we have seen in Turkey when the government decided to penalise 'honour' killing as murder. However, these crimes are not universally supported in the Kurdish community, or any other community and the media exposure of this case may help move mentalities along amongst those who reject it. We hope that despite the failures to recognise the danger which Banaz was reporting to the police, the police's willingness to devote such time and resources to detection, and the renewal of measures designed to protect women, that women will be confident to approach the police hereafter.

Al-Nisa: Banaz's trial hit upon the issue of arranged marriages (her own failed marriage and Skala's who until this moment doesn't know she is married to Rawan) and their obvious link to 'honour' killings, do you agree with that? If you don't agree, why? What do you think the issues were when the jury sat to consider their verdict?

Diana: Certainly the tradition of arranging marriage is very much key in the whole concept of 'honour'. Arranged marriages are typically made more with

an eye to the compatibility of families than of the individuals concerned and this can degrade into those arranging the marriage (typically men) prioritising their own interests above those of their daughters, nieces etc and . Arranging marriage without the express request of those who will take part in the marriage creates an unfair power relation which leaves young people open to abuse, particularly when money or citizenship are involved. We have seen that arranged marriage was unquestioned in the Mahmud family: Bekhal, Banaz's older sister was forced to leave the home to avoid an unwanted marriage to a cousin in Iraq and the marriages of the other sisters all seem to have been arranged - and unsuccessful. Forced marriage should be regarded very seriously: it is a crime akin to slavery and rape and cultural differences must not obscure this. 'Honour' is the mechanism by which women are indoctrinated or forced to accept their status as objects of exchange, whose value rests in their obedience and submission to men; forced marriage is the reality of those exchanges.



Al-Nisa: Your organisation is leading a campaign called 'Justice for Banaz', what does it involve?

Diana: We are asking for a full public enquiry around the police failures which resulted in Banaz's death and a review of police responses to 'honour' crime and forced marriage to ensure that other women reporting to police. We believe that if the police had taken proper cognisance of the

'honour' crime as it occurs in Britain, Banaz's life would have been saved. We believe that 'Justice for Banaz' will be served when we can be sure that no other woman will fall victim to 'honour' killing through police ignorance and inaction.

A-Nisa: What does the Campaign achieve so far?

Diana: IKWRO call for a full investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission, and urge the Crown prosecution Service to bring the remaining suspects to justice. The campaign has gained a lot of media attention and pressure has been put on police. They will be holding an enquiry, and new structures to deal with 'honour' killing are being set up including the project for 'flagging' forced marriage and 'honour' related crime. All these are welcome, but we would also like to see more training and expertise in 'honour' killing being spread across the whole country and not just in those areas which the police have designated 'honour' the project for 'flagging' forced marriage and 'honour' related crime. All these are welcome, but we would also like to see more training and expertise in 'honour' killing being spread across the whole country and not just in those areas which the police have designated 'honour' crime hotspots and for collaborative work to be undertaken between police and other frontline workers who come into contact with potential victims.

Al-Nisa: What's the campaign's future? Would it end after the ending of the trial?

Diana: Hopefully Banaz Mahmud will become a case like the case of

Victoria Climbié in the social services system: a name and case story that has led to widespread changes in responses to failures. We will keep campaigning in the name of Banaz, and other victims of 'honour' crime to ensure that police and other public servants respond appropriately to 'honour' crime.

Al-Nisa: The Metropolitan Police (Met) are holding an internal inquiry to investigate why they lost the chances of saving Banaz's life in several occasions when she complained about a family plot to kill her, would you ask for this inquiry to be public?

Diana: We would very much prefer a public enquiry. It's not just the police that can learn by the errors made in this case: social services, health-care workers, educational workers are just some of the people who have contact with those who are at risk and should also be aware of what to do (and what not to do) when approached by a woman who needs help.

Al-Nisa: Do you think the Met needs an intensive training on these 'honour' crimes to be able to act instantly when a potential sufferer comes to them?

Diana: Not just the Met but every police force should provide training in recognition of 'honour' crimes; every police force should have a specialist officer or department to deal with these crimes, and protection strategies should be planned well in advance of any appeal for help. Potential victims often do not appreciate the seriousness of the

threats against them and come to the police at quite a late stage.

The first contact with police may be the last opportunity so they must be ready to act immediately.

Al-Nisa: You are also leading an international campaign against 'honour' killings, how successful that campaign in highlighting the problem? What measures does it have to prevent such crimes from taking place?

Diana: The International Campaign Against Honour Killings has become a



very important resource for people interested in the phenomenon of 'honour' crime and to does it have to prevent such crimes from taking place?

Diana: The International Campaign Against Honour Killings has become a very important resource for people interested in the phenomenon of 'honour' crime and to network activists. For the prevention of crime, we have created an international directory of agencies available to help women in their own countries, but unfortunately there has not been much response as yet. If any readers are working for the protection of potential victims of 'honour' crime, we ask you to go to www.stophonourkillings.com and submit your details.

Al-Nisa: What do you think the real statistics of women killed for 'honour'

are why do you think it's difficult to obtain such accurate figures? ? Is it 40 each 3 months as the UN stated on their April report? Or do you think it's far more than that and

Diana: Forty for three months actually only refers to honour crime known to the UN in Iraqi-Kurdistan! Real statistics are impossible to measure: in countries where 'honour' killing is prevalent often baby girls are not registered at birth, 'honour' killings are disguised as suicides or accidental deaths, complicit police and medical workers make false records of the causes of death. In Europe, 'honour' crime has been recorded as domestic violence. All we can be sure of is that whatever statistics are given by governments or NGOs is that the reality is worse.

Al-Nisa: Given the UN's statistics, I mentioned above, do you think if that rate of killing young women and girls continued it might create a generation gap?

Diana: One United Nations estimate says from 113 million to 200 million women around the world are demographically "missing." Every year, from 1.5 million to 3 million women and girls lose their lives as a result of gender-based violence or neglect. Statistics from the UN Census bureau show this effect in action: while in most countries the rate of women to men in society is stable at around 51% women to 49% men, which difference is based on women's longer life-spans, in some countries these proportions are reversed: these include Sudan, Iran and Pakistan. Honour crime is just one of the many reasons of the increased mortality rates for women in these countries which also include reduced access to healthcare, worse diets and less opportunity in life in general. For more information visit their website <http://www.ikwro.org.uk//>

Report on the Remembrance Service for Banaz Babakir Mahmud

Combating Honour based Violence Forum (CHVF) organised a remembrance service for Banaz Mahmud Babakir Agha, a victim of the so called "Honour killing" on Tuesday 26th June 2007 in Morden Assembly hall followed by a visit to Banaz's grave in Merton and Sutton Cemetery.

Members of many Kurdish, Asian and Middle Eastern Women organisations, senior employees from Amnesty International, the metropolitan police and crown prosecution service (CPS).

The service started with one minute silence in respect to Banaz and other victims of the so called Honour Killings.

Gona Saed the facilitator of CHVF chaired

the service; and invited participants to speak on behalf of their organisations and departments.

Speakers included Nazir Afzal from CPS, Sawsan Salim from Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organisation, Diana Nammi from Iranian and Kurdish Women Rights Organisation, Steve Allen on behalf of the Metropolitan Police (the Met), Heather Harvey from Amnesty International, Hananah Siddiqui from Southall Black Sisters, Dr. Aisha Gill from IMKAAN and Newham Asian women project, and Nadia Mahmood from The Middle East Centre for Women's Rights.

For instance Nazir Afzal from CPS, said there is no justification for killing women because of "honour", murder is murder and there is absolutely no "honour" in taking someone's life away.

Hananah Siddiqi from the Southall Black Sisters confirmed the importance of making the voices of women from our community heard. She urged for more fund-



ing for the valuable work that women's organisations are doing.

Sawsan Salim from Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organisation, said that many Kurdish women from Iraqi Kurdistan in this country are under the threat of deportation to Kurdistan because of the strict Immigration rules, should these women be returned, many of them will be under direct threat of Honour Killing.

Diana Nammi from Iranian and Kurdish Women Rights Organisation, said that women organisations would like to see a full investigation in to the way that police handled Banaz's case from the very beginning so the lesson could be learned to help potential victims.

Steve Allen on behalf of the Met Police, said that now is the time for police to listen to women's organisations and to make commitment to take measures to address the Honour Killing and how to prevent more victims.

Participants all stressed that more partnership working, cooperation, training police officers and investments, making use of the existing legislations and human rights laws to help potential victims of Honour Killing and preventing these brutal crimes are needed.

Women's organisations urged the police to provide more training for their frontline staff members, to deal with potential victims sensitively and not make assumptions about them. Measures need to be

taken to tackle the problems that keep women going back to their families from immigration, poverty, accessibility of services and language barriers.

The service received many messages from various women's organisations such as Rights of Women and Greater London Domestic Violence Project and from members of the Kurdish community from UK and Europe.

Bekhal Mahmud, Banaz's older sister sent a message to the service calling for more and accessible service for potential victims of honour killing

For more information on this report or the CBVF call on 02077012206 or email Gona Saed on: admin@mecwr.org

Say No to 'No Recourse to Public Funds' Policy Up-

'No recourse to public funds' are the words commonly found in the passports of UK immigrants. This status is used by the Home Office to deny certain people access to public funds while remaining in the UK. 'Public funds' refers to a specific list of benefits and other payments, such as income support, housing, child and council tax benefits.

In their joint resource pack the Southall Black Sisters (SBS) and Women's Resource Centre (WRC) stated that people, "With 'no recourse to public funds' are those who, due to their immigration status are permitted to be in this country but are not qualified for many of the public funds that other UK residents can claim, such as benefits, and council housing. For British national's partners or spouses to enter the UK there is often a clause attached to bar 'recourse to public funds.'" (More information can be obtained at: <http://www.wrc.org.uk/>). Problematically a group of those being denied access to these funds are in desperate need of them. The 'no recourse to public funds' status adversely affects women experiencing domestic violence who also have insecure immigration status due to entering the UK to join their partner. Women who experience this unequal access to protection often include

women who are married or are partners of a British national or someone settled in this country; and women who are partners or dependants of students and workers, or are here temporarily for other reasons. In many instances, these women already have children who are British citizens. SBS conducted a survey between 1999 and 2003. They estimated 600 women every year who have insecure immigration status are subject to domestic violence from their spouse.

However, the combination of immigration and welfare rights legislation ensures that they cannot access safe accommodation or welfare benefits which are necessary to leave a violent relationship. The result is that these women are unable to break free from their abusive partners, unless they are willing to do it without support.

The 'Campaign to Abolish No Recourse to Public Funds' urges that access to public funds be available for these women with insecure immigration status so that they may free themselves from violence and danger.

The Domestic Violence Immigration Rule allows women who enter the UK as spouses or long-term partners of a British national or someone settled in this country, and who are subject to a two year probationary period, to apply for residency if they can 'prove' the relationship broke down due to domestic violence. This rule however, is of little help to women facing domestic violence if support services are not provided to these women in the interim period. Therefore, the 'no recourse to public funds' status means that many women are unable to access safety and protection for the length of time it takes to

submit an application. Because women facing domestic violence need resources to enable them to access safety, support and advice. Before filling a Domestic Violence Immigration Rule application, an exemption to the 'no recourse to public funds rule' for all women experiencing domestic violence and subject to immigration control is necessary for the safety of these women. The 'Campaign to Abolish No Recourse to Public Funds' urges that this change happen and that women facing domestic violence with insecure immigration status have access to support, legal advice, and other services integral to their safety and protection in the UK.

You Can Help By:

- Publicise the issue in any groups that you belong to - women's groups, political groups, and religious Organisations. Pass a resolution (model resolution is available), hold a public meeting.
- Tell your Member of Parliament (House of Commons, London, SW1A OAA) your views on the no recourse requirement and ask for his/her support for the campaign.

To join the campaign and for further information please contact the Southall Black Sisters on: 020 8571 9595 or Email them on: southallblacksisters@btconnect.com

Please also log to their website: www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Bill

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Bill is a Private Member's Bill prepared by Lord Anthony Lester of Herne Hill QC, together with the Southall Black Sisters and a team of leading family lawyers. The object and purpose of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Bill is to provide protection for the victims of forced marriage by means of civil remedies in the family courts. It seeks to empower and protect vulnerable women and men against serious abuse, involving violence, threats of violence and other forms of improper coercion, such as blackmail, harassment, abduction, and false imprisonment. The Bill makes provision, among other things, with respect to:

- The unlawfulness of forced marriage;
- Deceptive conduct for the purpose of causing another person to enter into a forced marriage;
- Unlawful inducement of acts leading to forced marriage;
- Aiding and abetting forced marriage;
- Orders for injunctions to prevent forced marriage; and
- Civil proceedings and damages.

The Bill contains civil remedies for forced marriage rather than criminal sanctions. There exist some indirect remedies in the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and the Family Law Act 1996 which may potentially be used in cases involving forced marriage.

The Bill however covers dimensions which are not addressed by these Acts, in particular deceptive conduct.

This Bill extends to England and Wales, and has undergone its first and second readings, and has been committed to a Grand Committee. It provides protection to victims of all ages and allows third parties to take action on behalf of forced marriage victims or potential victims, with their consent and with the consent of the court. The remedies would be available in a range of courts, including county courts, and would not be limited to the High Court. It would facilitate the grant of legal aid and assistance to victims and potential victims, and would not restrict the ability of the courts to fashion new procedures and remedies in this sensitive area.

Southall Black Sisters has been the Bill's leading supporter. The group issued a statement affirming their support of the Bill. Two amendments as proposed by the Southall Black Sisters in the areas of reform in the civil law and the need for more resources are not included in the Bill so as to maintain focus and on account that Private Member's Bills cannot refer to resource allocations. Regardless, Southall Black Sisters support the Bill as a necessary and integral step in reaching zero tolerance to forced marriages. Southall Black Sisters maintain that the Bill will empower victims to legally protect themselves, increase awareness, act as a deterrent, and simplify the process of obtaining an injunction.

The Women's Resource Centre also supports the bill for similar reasons. The Centre affirms that the law should be accessible and understandable, civil remedies should be strengthened rather than

increasing criminalization, victims should be empowered in their legal proceedings, and that the Bill will raise awareness in the legal system and society at large.

The Gender Equality Duty: Would it Bring Real Equality in Britain?

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) is a legal requirement for public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination between men and women in the workplace. As Karen Moore, the Women Resource Centre Policy Officer, has explained, most public bodies will have to show they are achieving this by publishing a gender equality scheme, reviewing their policies and practices to make sure they accommodate the diverse requirements of women and men, consulting with stakeholders to agree on the gender equality objectives that the gender equality scheme should deal with and ensuring the proceedings in the scheme are well implemented.

Al-Nisa is pleased that **Karen Moore**, the Policy Officer at the Women Resource Centre would explain the policy for us:

Al-Nisa: I believe that the GED did come into force in April, what has happened since then? Can you please give us an update on its work and application?

Karen: The Gender Equality Duty (GED) came in to force on 6th April 2007 and creates new legal requirements for public authorities (which include government, local authorities, police, schools, NHS) to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

Most public bodies will have to demonstrate they are achieving this by publishing a gender equality scheme, reviewing their policies and practices to ensure they meet the different needs of women and men, consulting with stakeholders to determine the gender equality objectives that the gender equality scheme should address and by ensuring the actions in the scheme are implemented.

Public bodies are required to report on their progress against the gender equality scheme every year and review it after three years. They were required to publish their gender equality schemes by 30th April 2007.

Al-Nisa: What's new in this bill which make it so distinctively different from all those past equality acts & policies?

Karen: Previous anti-discrimination legislation has placed the burden of proof regarding discrimination on the individual. The GED is a 'positive' duty meaning that public authorities will now have to prove that they are promoting equality and eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment.

Furthermore the GED is evidence based and outcome focused. This means it will have to demonstrate that it meets the objectives set out in the gender equality scheme. In addition, the objectives themselves must be based on robust statistical analysis and evidence of consultation with stakeholders (such as women's voluntary and community sector organisations).

Al-Nisa: What are the guarantees that it is going to be applied fairly and will benefit the most affected employees especially BME women?

Karen: The GED applies to public bodies, such as government departments, the police, NHS, schools and so on. It only applies to private or voluntary sector organisations if they are carrying out public functions e.g. a cleaning service contracted by the NHS or a private organisation running a prison service. Generally speaking this Duty does not apply to the private sector.

Public bodies have to demonstrate that the gender equality objectives they set out are based on sound evidence and in consultation with stakeholders. Most public bodies should now have published their schemes and they may be available to download from their websites or you could contact them by phone or in person to request a copy.

If you disagree with any of the objectives or feel that they have missed an issue which is of importance to you, then tell them. Public bodies want to get it right, but to do this they need to hear from you. For the GED to be effective, you need to use it and make your voice heard.

The Equal Opportunities Commission recently published a report* highlighting the barriers facing Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean women in gaining employment and progressing in their careers. Five employment gaps were found including: low participation in the labour market, unemployment, low rates of career progression, pay gap and occupational segregation.

The report suggests practical ways to create a culturally intelligent workplace and recommends that public sector employers use this as a means of meeting their requirements under the Race Relations Amendments Act and the GED.

Al-Nisa: What measures are going to be in place to resolve the equal pay issue, for instance, and are there going to be backdated payments to compensate for those past years of employments?

Karen: One of the aims of the GED is to address the gender pay gap and it incorporates the Equal Pay Act 1970 making it unlawful to discriminate in terms of pay. However, the GED does not require public authorities to undertake equal pay reviews; rather to meet the GED they need to 'demonstrate that they have considered the need to take action on pay discrimination'.

Back pay can be awarded *following a successful claim* by an employee. This could be up to six years from the date that proceedings were filed with the Employment Tribunal. The Employment Tribunal may also award interest on the award of compensation**.

Al-Nisa: Are you optimistic about the future equality of women? Or do you think these measures will safeguard the equality of women in our society as stated in the UN's human rights charters?

Karen: We still have a long way to go before equality can be achieved between women and men. Whilst the legislation is taking us in the right direction, it is how it is implemented in practice which is important. Public bodies that do not have a clear understanding about the root causes of inequality between women and men are at risk of interpreting 'equal' as meaning 'same'. However, the 'same'

Footnotes:

* Equal Opportunities Commission (2007) Moving on up? The way forward. EOC.

http://www.eoc.org.uk/PDF/bme_final_report2007.pdf

** Equal Opportunities Commission (2003) Code of Practice on Equal Pay. EOC.

treatment or processes does not necessarily result in the same outcomes. For example, it would be inappropriate for a service such as a women's refuge to be expected to provide services to men as well

That is why it is important that women and women's organisations do not miss the opportunity to input into gender equality schemes and participate in consultations on gender equality.

Al-Nisa: What are the employers' reactions in implementing these equality duties?

Karen: We are cautiously optimistic that public bodies will welcome the opportunity to address gender inequality. In order to meet the requirements of the GED public bodies will have to put resources into areas that have the most impact. Violence against women would be a good example of this, as it not only *directly* affects a significant proportion of women; it also indirectly affects all women.

However, it will be up to the voluntary sector to use the GED to hold public bodies to account and ensure that they are meeting the needs of women.

Women's Resource Centre will be producing a guide for the women's voluntary and community sector in the coming months about the GED and we will also be monitoring the implementation of the Duty.

Al-Nisa: Please add anything you think necessary in helping our readers' understanding of such duties and their impact on their personal lives.

Karen: The key message is that it is up to women's and other equalities organisations, and women themselves, to ensure that the GED is properly implemented and enforced.

In WRC's newsletter, *The Source* we set out a number of actions that organisations can take to ensure the GED is properly implemented. See below:

- Tell WRC and the Equal Opportunities Commission about your positive and negative experiences of the GED so that evidence can be collected on how it is being implemented.
- The EOC is responsible for enforcing the duty, check their website for more details: www.eoc.org.uk. By October 2007, the EOC will be replaced by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights; for this see: www.cehr.org.uk.
- Be clear about why your service is women-only and why women-only services are needed. WRC is writing a briefing about how legislation supports women-only services. This and other research will be available very soon at: www.wrc.org.uk.
- Public bodies, such as local authorities, are obliged to consult with relevant stakeholders on their gender equality schemes. Make sure you get involved and get your voice heard! See our templates for central and local government gender equality schemes on our website (available soon).
- Highlight gaps in services: Are local services adequate? E.g. what is the ratio of demand for the service to the need and how long are waiting lists? Is there a rape crisis centre?

- Ask public bodies to see their gender equality scheme. Tell public bodies if there are priorities which have been missed in their gender equality scheme or if you think a policy or practice could impact negatively on women.

Many public bodies are developing a single equalities scheme which covers all of the equalities groups. These are race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and faith. This is good practice, and we encourage women's groups to highlight the needs and issues of all women, including lesbians and bisexuals, older and younger women, and women from minority faith or religious communities.

- A Race Equality Duty and Disability Equality Duty are already in force. Make sure public bodies work with the equality duties together so that they meet the needs of ethnic minority and disabled women.
- If you are a service provider or have a contract with the government, you may have responsibilities under the GED. Check the EOC guidance for the voluntary sector, to be released soon
- The End Violence Against Women Coalition has outlined some action points for women's groups to raise about Violence against women and the GED, and many of these action points are very relevant for all women's groups. Go to www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/

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Is Dua'a's Stoning a new dawn on women's public murder?



Hanan Babikir

On 7th of April 2007 a 17 year old female was stoned to death in Iraq. Amnesty International said that it was shocked by the stoning of Dua'a Khalil Aswad in a so called 'honour' killing. She was killed in a town called Bashika, near the city of Mosul. Hundreds of men including her own family members participated in her horrific stoning.

Dua'a's public murder was committed by her relatives and other Yezidis men because of her relationship with a Sunni Muslim boy. She was given sanctuary in a house of the Yezidis' tribal leader in Bashika, but her killers broke into the house, took her outside and stoned her for 30 minutes, resulting in death. Some of the spectators shamefully filmed this horrific crime on their mobile and posted on the internet. They also showed the presence of the security forces on the video film who apathetically failed to stop this crime or arrest the responsible party.

In the strongest terms Amnesty International condemned the stoning of Dua'a Aswad and called on the Iraqi authorities to bring the guilty party to face justice. They also asked Iraq to take serious measures to protect those at risk of the so-called 'honour' killings.

Al-Nisa learnt that the Iraqi authority investigated the police officers appeared on the video footage of the stoning but freed them without any charge. It appears that the government didn't do anything as far as this girl's appalling murder.

In northern Iraq, in particular. Kurdistan, there are



Dua'a Khalil Aswad

reports of 'honour' based crimes against women and girls who were said to have shamed the 'honour' of their families. The UN has reported 40 cases of 'honour' killings in the first 3 months of 2007 (IRIN, April 07). Justifications for committing such crimes were based on false accusations and rumours. Male members of the women's families are the ones who usually carry out such murders; however the Kurdish authorities failed to prosecute them.

Reports also talk about how women take their own lives to escape arranged marriages or economic hardships. Kurdish Women's Union in Sulimanyih had recorded 83 cases in the first 6 months of 2006 and 95 cases in the first half of 2007 (www.alarabia.net/articles/2007).

We must condemn those governments which carry out capital punishments on women and girls.

Women's Forum Against Fundamentalism in Iran (WFAFI) states that Iranian government counted 189 prisoners who

They also mentions that currently, there are eight women sentenced to death by stoning including under 20 year olds (www.wfafi.org).

It is also feared that religious extremist groups are behind fuelling these horrific crimes against women and women's rights activists everywhere in the world. As The Times newspaper has mentioned that across "Europe and increasingly, it seems, in Britain, as Muslims become more conservative ... religious fundamentalism strengthens its grip, growing numbers of women are being killed or

mutilated in the name of family honour" (The Times, 17 June 2007).

Just to mention that IKWRO (Iranian & Kurdish Women's Rights) and OWFI (Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq) organised a conference in memory of Dua'a entitled "No More Stones" on 18th May 07 which can be accessed via: (www.ikwro.org.uk).

Amnesty International also organised an conference entitled 'Honour Killing: How Many More'; which can be accessed by logging to:

(www.amnesty.org). If you want to join the campaign for condemning stoning go to amnesty International website and print out their template letter to send to the authorities in Iraq (<http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGMDE1402722007>).

The Emergence of Female Genital Mutilation in Kurdistan



In an interview with Sawsan Salim, the Co-ordinator for Kurdistan Refugee Women Organisation (KRWO), to

highlight the emergence of female genital mutilation (FGM) phenomenon in Iraqi Kurdistan, stated that



since 1991 FGM made a come back to the villages. Now it is widespread in the major cities; such as Arbil, Karkuk and Raniyah. She attributed this to the surfacing of the tribal and Islamic movements in northern Iraq and their women's rights violation agenda.

However, a study carried out in 2005 by WADI, a German organisation working in Iraq; found out that 3188 out of 3981 girls and women had been circumcised in the villages around the cities of Arbil, Karkuk, and Al-Sulaymaniyah. This represents a shocking high percentage of women.

She also talked about the FGM's immediate and long-term health effects on women and girls. It has psychological, physical and health impacts on the women. In one of

Al-Sulaymaniyah's hospitals; Shursh Hospital, there were 15 cases of circumcision, where some of the women requested the operation especially while they were giving birth, due to spouses' pressure. There is a widespread social opinion that food and drinks from uncircumcised women is prohibited (*muharam*).

Sawsan recommends that a civil law and a committed government to implement this law, away from the religious and tribal values, it should

Sawsan recommends that a civil law and a committed government to implement this law, away from the religious and tribal values, it should support civil society organisations and to work and empower them, are required.

A report about Together for Iraqi Women's Rights' conference in London on the 9th March 2007

A network of several Iraqi women's rights organisations based in Iraq and the United Kingdom; which includes Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq, Act Together: Women's Action for Iraq, Iraqi Women's League, Middle East Centre for Women's Rights, Iraqi Community Association: Women's Section, and Marem Reshakh: Assyrian Women's Human Rights, wanted to draw people's attention to the plight of Iraqi Women's Human Rights.

Almost four years of occupation, increasing violence, terror and



instability had driven the society into chaos and total anarchy. While everyone suffers, women are paying a particularly high price. Lack of adequate health care, clean water and electricity, unemployment, abductions, rape, sex trafficking, honour killings, violence at the hands of occupation forces, Islamist militias and insurgents, criminal gangs and families as well as sectarian killings and targeted assassinations terrorise the lives of thousands of women.

They agreed that those who live in the United Kingdom share the pain and suffering of women inside Iraq. They still remain in solidarity and sisterhood with the Iraqi women in these dark times and are marking the 8th of March 2007, International Women's Day as an expression of this solidarity with women's struggles on the ground in Iraq.

They mentioned that this year's IWD honours 100 years i.e. a century of the struggles and achievements of women all over the world. They, as activists who are concerned with women's rights in Iraq, want to mark International Women's Day 2007. They were planning a set of activities in London to express their solidarity, reclaim the day and exert pressure on the current Iraqi government as well as the United States and United Kingdom to repeal Article 41 of the current Iraqi Constitution and demand appropriate recognition of full equality between women and men regardless

of ethnicity and religious background. Article 41 replaces the present secular Personal Status Law with Islamic Sharia Law.

The conference called upon all women's organisations, political parties, NGOs, trade unions, charities and individual activists to sponsor their initiative and give moral, practical and political support to make these events a success.

The conference was launched by Nadjé al-Ali from Act Together. She also presented a paper titled



'Iraqi Women and Gender Relations during the Baath Regime', Cynthia Cockburn, from Women in Black, talked about 'Gender as a motor of war: can we switch off the ignition', while Houzan Mahmoud, OWFI, spoke about 'The Constitution, Islamic Sharia Law and Women's Rights in Iraq and Kurdistan' and Jean Lambert-MEP, also reflected on the constitution by asking 'Whose Constitution?'

There was an exhibition of photographs and writings about the Iraqi women struggle. They also drafted a resolution in support of Iraqi women and circulated it amongst British and international policy-makers, the Iraqi government, NGOs, and the media.

In the evening the conference organised a vigil and demonstration in Trafalgar Square to raise awareness about the plight, struggles and demands of Iraqi women.

Events

[Why Women? 2007: Making the case for women-only spaces and services](#)

Date: Wednesday 17 October 2007

Organised by: Women's Resource Centre

Location: King's Fund, London W1G

Details: The conference will focus on the need for women-only spaces and services.

Speakers include representatives of YWCA, Eaves, Rights of Women, British Institute of Human Rights, Women's Health Matters, Rape Crisis, and many more!

How to book: See

www.wrc.org.uk/conference for more details including ticket prices, bursary scheme, and booking forms. Call 02073243040 or email: conference@wrc.org.uk
[Reclaim the Night](#)

Date: 24th November, 6pm

Organised by: London Feminist Network

Details: This is a free annual women only march against male violence will culminate in a mixed gender rally at the University of London Union where they will reclaim the right to party with bands, speeches and dancing. Last year the march attracted over 1000 women, please help them to make it bigger and better by bringing friends, family, colleagues and neighbours.

Download flyers at:

<http://www.ldnfeministnetwork.uk.com>.

Location: Trafalgar square, rally at ULU, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY

[A Song Against Violence Against Women](#)

FaceDown – Red Jumpsuit Apparatus

Hey girl you know you drive me crazy
one look puts the rhythm in my hand.
Still I'll never understand why you hang around
I see what's going down.

Cover up with make up in the mirror
tell yourself it's never gonna happen again
you cry alone and then he swears he loves you.

Do you feel like a man
when you push her around?
Do you feel better now as she falls to the ground?
Well I'll tell you my friend, one day this world's going to end
as your lies crumble down, a new life she has found.

A pebble in the water makes a ripple effect
every action in this world will bear a consequence
If you wade around forever you will surely drown
I see what's going down.

I see the way you go and say your right again,
say your right again
heed my lecture

Do you feel like a man
when you push her around?
Do you feel better now as she falls to the ground?
Well I'll tell you my friend, one day this world's going to end
as your lies crumble down a new life she has.

One day she will tell you that she has had enough
its coming round again.
its coming round again.

Do you feel like a man, when you push her around?
Do you feel better now as she falls to the grown?
Well I'll tell you my friend, one day this world's going to end
as your lies crumble down, a new life she has.

Face down in the dirt she says, this doesn't hurt she says I finally had enough..
Face down in the dirt she says, this doesn't hurt she says I finally had enough..

Volunteering Opportunity at MECWR (Fundraising)

The Middle East Centre for Women's Rights (MECWR) is looking for volunteers (male/ female) fundraisers who are passionate about the work we do in our organisation.

The volunteer fundraiser will work alongside a very enthusiastic and dynamic team of staff and volunteers who are working happily and determinedly to end all forms of violence against women in the Middle Eastern communities in the UK and the Middle East.

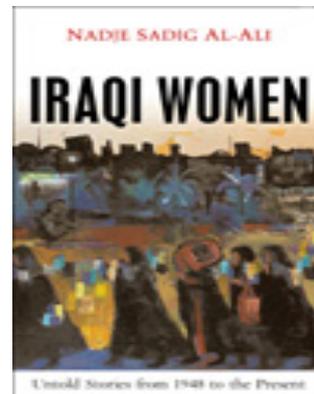
MECWR is an international organisation whose work goes to support women in the UK and overseas.

If you have time and interest, we want to hear from you. MECWR will reimburse the volunteer's travel and lunch expenses.

If interested, please call Nadia Mahmood on 020 7701 2206 or 078 900 65 933, or email nadia@mecwr.org.

Speeches, books & article

Nadje Al-Ali challenges the myths and misconceptions which have dominated debates about Iraqi women, bringing a much needed gender perspective to bear on the central political issue of our time. She traces the political history of Iraq from post-colonial independence, to the emergence of a women's movement in the 1950s and Saddam Hussein's early policy of state feminism. The book also discusses the increases in social conservatism, domestic violence and prostitution, and shows that, far from being passive victims, Iraqi women have been, and continue to be, key political actors. Following the invasion and occupation, al-Ali analyses the impact of Islam on women's lives and argues that US-led calls for liberation may in the long term the serve to oppress women of Iraq further.



An Invitation for Women to March in March

8 March 2008, Hyde Park, London

Dedicated to the dignity of women internationally and the women with no recourse to public funds and the trafficked women in the UK.

For more information or to pledge your support, email millionwomanrise@gmail.com.

Sabrina Qureshi, the organiser of the event states that they are planning to come together with other women on the Saturday 8th March 2008.

Also she urges any group if in need of support in how to get to London on the 8th March 2008, i.e. travel, accommodation not hesitate to contact her, because she would do whatever she could for women to attend and money should not be the reason to stop a woman from attending.

Please do contact Sabrina at millionwomanrise@gmail.com."

