



This International Women's Day, support Syrian Women in their work on conflict resolution, peace-building and accountability

A press release from the Syrian Women's Network and No Peace Without Justice

Gaziantep/ Turkey, 8 March 2014

Today, 8 March 2014, women of the world are celebrating their international day, which this year focuses on the theme of "Equality for Women is Progress for All". The women of Syria are celebrating also, against a backdrop of violations ranging from arrest and kidnapping, being used as weapons of war, sexual and gender-based violence and rape, oppression in public fields and being forced to wear a veil. Many Syrian women are not even able to celebrate this day at home, having been displaced and forced to seek asylum in new environments with new and additional roles to maintain their families and their lives.

[According to a recent UNHCR report](#), 80% of Syrian refugees are women and children. Women who have been forced from their country are facing similar challenges and difficulties as they face in Syria, including forced and early marriages, exposure to sexual harassment inside and outside refugee camps, disruption of education and their inability to easily access medical and humanitarian services. Much more needs to be done to shine a light on these issues and for the international community to work together with the host countries to find durable solutions, to the benefit of everyone.

Today, on International Women's Day, the Syrian woman speaks out once again to remind the world of her demands for freedom, democracy, equality and dignity. The Syrian woman speaks out to underscore her determination to achieve her rights, which manifests itself in the contribution of Syrian women and their hard work on various levels in building civil peace and engaging in relief work inside and outside of Syria. The Syrian woman speaks out to support conflict resolution efforts, reminding the world of their efforts to support the Geneva II negotiations by launching the ["Syrian Women for Peace and Democracy"](#) initiative, thus confirming the Syrian woman's right to participate in political negotiations and making a better Syrian future.

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, the Syrian Women's Network stresses its serious and urgent request to the international community to intensify efforts in ending the conflict in Syria. A critical aspect of this is to support women in their political and civil endeavors to take on an active role in building Syria, including heeding the demands of Syrian Women who have become refugees and securing their daily needs and demands, at the very least.

We in the Syrian Women's Network of Independent figures and democratic non-governmental organizations believe in the Syrian Revolution and its goals to promote and



protect the human rights of all Syrians. We are working on gender equality and consolidating democracy, human rights, civil peace, transitional justice and women's participation in decision-making in the future Syria. We are forming an active force in the democratisation process towards a civil, democratic, free and united Syria where citizenship and equality obtain without any discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, nationality, ethnicity, belief, wealth, or prestige. We believe in a future Syria where the authority of the law is the supreme authority in which the right of equality is guaranteed among all individuals.

To that end, we are working with organizations and groups with common goals in order to empower women on all levels. No Peace Without Justice has recognised these principles through dedicating a special award for Syrian women as part of its inaugural Human Rights Award, to applaud their courage in taking to the streets to protest against the Assad regime and in facing firsthand the violence of the war. Together, we invite the international community to work in the same way, with the same goals – to support Syrian women to play an active role in rebuilding Syria by supporting initiatives that stem from and are implemented by Syrian women.

To celebrate this International Women-s Day, the Syrian Women's Network and No Peace Without Justice are organising cinematic cultural events and a workshop aiming at raising awareness on women's rights and the discriminatory laws of the Syrian law, as well as launching a media campaign on social networking sites entitled "Be the Change".

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