



## WLUMML Wishes You a Peaceful 2023

The events of 2022 were devastating for women's human rights in many Muslim contexts. Yet, throughout the year, women's solidarity has shone through and given us all hope and courage.

This month in Afghanistan, women's limited and segregated access to higher education was finally slammed closed by the Taliban. The Taliban who, despite guarantees for 'all human and legal rights of every child, woman and man', have not failed to show their true colours by consistently rolling back women's basic human rights and freedoms.

In Iran, the killing of the young woman Mahsa Amini while in custody by the morality police for wearing the veil incorrectly has brought grief to the nation. Anger that the regime uses women's bodies and beings as political strings has led to widespread protest across the country, and subsequently, through its repression, the death of many more young people. But young women will have no more and, despite the danger and extreme violence, under the banner of 'Woman, Life, Freedom' have poured into the streets and burned their veils. Young men have also stood by them and are rejecting the regime's regressive perspective on women and men's dignity and human rights.

The legal basis for the protection of women against violence has also been shaken. Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention that recognises violence against women as a violation of human rights. In Sudan there is increasing violence against women and women human rights defenders. In Pakistan, 33 million people are suffering because of the floods. And, in Indonesia, we witnessed one step forward as the parliament passed the Sexual Violence Bill after 10 years of debates and discussion, however, the celebration did not last long as a harsh law was passed that criminalised sexual relations outside marriage as illegal even for non-nationals and poses a particular threat to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) people.

### Iranian women keep up the pressure for real change — but will broad public support continue?



Iranian women keep up the pressure for real change — but will broad public support continue? (theconversation.com)

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### Afghanistan's women in exile continue to push for equality



Taliban violence against women and girls is on the rise in Afghanistan – The Washington Post

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### Spotlighting an Author – Mona Tajali: Women's Political Representation in Iran and Turkey



Spotlighting an Author – Mona Tajali: Women's Political Representation in Iran and Turkey – YouTube

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Articles by our networkers 2022

### WLUML SPOTLIGHT #1

Where there is a will, there is a way. Hiba is a woman who is a role model for many women in Iran and Turkey.

As a woman who has lived in both Iran and Turkey, Hiba has a unique perspective on the challenges women face in both countries. She has been a vocal advocate for women's rights and has worked to empower other women in her community. Her story is a testament to the power of resilience and the importance of community support.

**Pazoukia Eckerström**  
National Representative to the Board of Directors

### WLUML SPOTLIGHT #2

Don't let Taliban prohibitions be the legacy of the 20th century.

The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan has brought back a dark chapter in the country's history. Women's rights have been severely restricted, and the lives of women are once again in jeopardy. It is crucial that we do not let this be the legacy of the 20th century. We must continue to fight for women's rights and ensure that progress is not lost.

**Pazoukia Eckerström**  
National Representative to the Board of Directors

### WLUML SPOTLIGHT #3

Iran and beyond

The struggle for women's rights in Iran is a global issue that resonates with women in many other Muslim-majority countries. The challenges they face are similar, and their fight for equality is a shared one. We must support their efforts and work together to bring about positive change.

**By Anonymos**

### WLUML SPOTLIGHT #4

Who are the women of Afghanistan? A lesson for us all.

The women of Afghanistan are a testament to the human spirit. Despite the hardships they have faced, they have continued to fight for their rights and the rights of their fellow citizens. Their story is a powerful reminder of the strength and resilience of women everywhere.

**Arianna Haddad**  
National Representative to the Board of Directors

### WLUML Spotlight, our new opinion piece series

Woman, Life, Freedom!

I am delighted that young people are involved in following the demand for respecting human rights across the world. They are committed to making an informed decision to make the world a more peaceful and women-friendly place.

**Homa Hoodfar**

From my own experience, I have learned that being a woman in a male-dominated society is not just a matter of gender, but a matter of power. We must work together to challenge the status quo and create a more equitable world for all.

**Saba F. Eshani**

WLUML shows that women are not just victims of oppression, but also agents of change. We must continue to fight for our rights and the rights of others, and we must not let our voices be silenced.

**Dr. Pazoukia Eckerström**

The 16 Days of Activism is a powerful reminder of the need for collective action. We must stand together and demand change from our governments and the international community. Our voices are our power.

**Dr. Pazoukia Eckerström**

WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM

16 Days of Activism

Dr. Pazoukia Eckerström

Messages from our networkers for 16DaysofActivism and information on our recent events

PODCAST

# The WLUML Podcast

The WLUML Podcast

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**Homa Hoodfar Talks Elimination of Violence Against Women**

To commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Hiba and Arianna are down with Homa Hoodfar, WLUML Board Member and Professor of Anthropology at...

Nov 24 - 31 min 46 sec

**Metal Musicians in the Middle East: State Blasphemy or Self-Actualization?**

In this episode, Hiba speaks to Pazoukia (Paki) Eckerström, Doctoral Researcher in Religious...

Welcome to the WLUML

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A storytelling space for anyone striving for individual and/or collective autonomy within Muslim countries and communities, but whose lives are shaped, conditioned or governed by...

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Society Culture

The WLUML Podcast, our new podcast



Despite these events, throughout 2022 solidarity amongst women in Muslim contexts has proved strong and resilient. Iranian women of all ages, and even some young men, have cut their hair in solidarity with Mahsa Amini (and all women in Iran who have felt the aggression of the Islamic Republic). This solidarity was not limited to those in Iran but also felt internationally, particularly amongst the diaspora (there was an unprecedented estimated eighty to one hundred thousand people at one demonstration in Berlin).

It is perhaps the solidarity from women from Afghanistan with their Iranian sisters that has been most moving. Women from Afghanistan understand better than anyone else a regime of fear and repression conducted in the name of religion. Risking dispersal by the Taliban, they were there outside the Iranian embassy in Kabul chanting in solidarity for “Woman, Life, Freedom”.

16 Days of Activism was a global opportunity to stand up against gender-based violence. Within WLUMML, our established networkers and young activists shared why 16 Days is important to them and their hopes for the future. You can find their powerful responses here on WLUMML’s Instagram. It was also an opportunity to connect with new partners including the EŞİK Platform, discuss women’s rights from a regional perspective with Magdeburg University, and to sit down with Board Member Homa Hoodfar to discuss the elimination of violence against women and its impact on the formation and development of WLUMML (see WLUMML’s new podcast).

For the new WLUMML Podcast we have connected to activists across different contexts. Hilal talks Muslim women rappers and decolonising feminism, Mobeen and Sara shared their experiences in Afghanistan before the Taliban and their exile from their homeland, and Pasqualina shared her research on heavy metal musicians in the Middle East and how they produce music to promote their right to self-actualisation.



2022 was also the first time many of us were able to connect in person. First in Toronto, for the three-day meeting with Afghan women politicians and civil society leaders now living in North America. And then in London, for the research and planning conference that connected our youngest and most active members. It is our sincere hope that 2023 will bring greater opportunities for collective work and the sharing of experiences.

We look forward to welcoming in the year and continuing to strive for gender equality and justice together.

In peace and with love,

WLUMML