



Women living under muslim laws
النساء في ظل قوانين المسلمين
Femmes sous lois musulmanes
Transnational Feminist Solidarity Network

On this 10th of December, as we observe the anniversary of the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, we witness the downfall of one of the world's most notorious dictators, Bashar al-Assad, the President of Syria. This moment holds the promise of an end to brutal torture, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances. However, this promise of liberation is overshadowed by two grave realities: the ongoing aggression by Israel, which thus far has launched over 250 attacks in violation of the 1974 peace agreement, and the troubling influence of certain Islamist groups, some of whom are designated terrorists with ties to al-Qaeda and the short-lived Islamic State in Iraq. Both pose significant threats to the principles of international law, sovereignty, and human rights.

The international community must unequivocally condemn Israel's aggression against Syrian territory, as such actions undermine the sovereignty of an already fractured nation and fuel instability. These attacks, justified under claims of security concerns, disregard international norms and the peace agreements meant to prevent further escalation in the region. Israel's actions, at this juncture and in the current political vacuum in Syria, risk setting a dangerous precedent that the state of Israel is above the law.

At the same time, the involvement of Islamist groups, whose ideologies often lack respect for women's human rights, raises further concerns about the direction Syria's future may take. This dual assault on Syria—external aggression from Israel and internal threats from extremist groups—places the nation at a precarious crossroads.

Today, as we join the international community in acknowledging and celebrating the collapse of another brutal dictatorship, we cannot ignore the unsettling questions that loom. An urgent question emerges: where do women stand in the aftermath? Even as the United Nations and global leaders prepare to hail Syria's apparent liberation, and as Europe and Turkey deliberate over the return of 5.5 million refugees to a precarious and uncertain climate, women's rights advocates are sounding the alarm. Observing the situation in Iran, Afghanistan, and other Muslim-majority nations, history warns us that transitions of power often come at the expense of women's hard-fought freedoms.

This looming threat is especially troubling when viewed against the backdrop of frameworks like UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which unequivocally mandates women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations. Syrian women have been the backbone of their families and communities during thirteen years of devastating civil war, contributing as leaders, humanitarians, and visionaries. Yet, despite their invaluable sacrifices and resilience, we have thus far witnessed little indication they will be given a seat at the table in shaping Syria's future.

We must confront an uncomfortable truth: the global discourse on Syria's political transition has paid scant attention to how various interpretations of Islamic ideology—moderate or extreme—might dictate women's fundamental rights and their role in society. Without considerable effort by women advocates, Syrian women may follow in the footsteps of their counterparts in Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq, watching as decades of progress are erased in the name of political expediency.

The international community, and particularly transnational women's movements, must remain vigilant in their support for Syrian women's demands for equal citizenship and human rights. At the same time, they must address and condemn all external aggressions, including Israel's violations of Syrian sovereignty, which exacerbate the challenges facing the Syrian people. It is not enough to applaud the fall of tyranny. The global community must also ensure that women's rights are safeguarded and amplified in Syria's new political landscape.

As we celebrate the fall of a brutal dictator, it is equally important to provide moral support and platforms for Syrian women advocates to articulate their vision and ensure that half the population is not silenced, sidelined, or made invisible in the name of extreme religious ideology or geopolitical expediency. Anything less is not liberation—it is another betrayal.

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International Coordination Office, UK
Email: wluml@wluml.org Website: www.wluml.org