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Women's Resistance Panorama From March 8, 2020 to March 8, 2021

The past year from March 8 2020 to March 8 2021 has been marked by increased feminicidal attacks by the patriarchal system and women's resistance to these attacks. In the past year, which passed more or less under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, male violence was named the "shadow pandemic" because the patriarchal mindset and its system deepened its feminicide in this time. The patriarchal system has taken maximum advantage of the conditions under Covid-19 and made use of it in its war against women. That's the reason why the fascist government in Turkey has set free imprisoned murderers of women for 'health reasons'. Both, Turkey and the populist Polish government tried to take advantage of the opportunity to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Patriarchal-misogynist structures, capitalist policies, fascist-authoritarian regimes, militarism, occupation and wars continue to violate women's and girl's rights and to risk their lives. Deepened poverty, economic inequality, climate change and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic make it more difficult. Discrimination and violence, based on sexism, are seen in the rhetoric and actions of many governments and groups with different political views, religious beliefs and cultures. We have seen more than enough concrete examples of this in the past year.

But we could see also how women's resistance around the world has risen quantitatively and qualitatively. Although the patriarchal system tried to make use of the pandemic from the outset to break women's pursuit of a free life, the struggle of women has risen under the conditions of the crisis. Women have carried their quest for freedom and isolation a step forward, under heavy attacks. Numerous women's declarations and online discussions are an important expression of this. We are aware that online discussions cannot take the place of direct organisation. But women around the world have been making big efforts in discussing social, political and systemic problems concerning both, women and the whole society, identifying the main challenges, find ways and methods of struggle. However they have also continued their struggle on the ground in an active way. Moreover despite all the obstructions by right-wing or reactionary forces most on the social forces struggling on the street have been women. Therefore we need to consider the genocidal/feminicidal attacks of the male-statist system on the one hand, and women's resistance on the other.

The Covid-19 pandemic a very serious increase in violence against women. This intensified during the



quarantine period, which was declared in many countries in the spring time, with women facing increased violence from their partners. This is verified by official statistics. Violence against women is becoming the main problem of today. This seems to be the most simple fact to have unfolded in the past year. In response women organised magnificent demonstrations around the world to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, despite the restrictions. Especially in Latin American countries, November 25 was a day of rebellion against patriarchy. In countries where femicide is particularly high, actions and demonstrations marking November 25 are bigger and more radical. In this sense countries like Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, France, Spain and Kurdistan witnessed beautiful women's actions. Women in France were shouting "Feminist Revolution". In Bolivia women carried placards with the slogan "Women's revolution against male violence". Another remarkable slogan was "I exist, therefore I resist". On one of the main banners in Spain "Women's struggle against male terror" was written. Here women laid emphasis on the importance of organising.

In general we can say that during the actions on November 25, 2020 the call for justice and to end femicide came to the fore. Women drew attention to increased sexual violence, victims of femicide were commemorated and their names were written on placards. More and more young women are joining the struggle against patriarchy. While the struggle for women's liberation is intergenerational, the women's movement itself is becoming younger and quantitatively bigger. This marks an important opportunity for the women's movement.

One main topic or goal of the women's liberation and equality struggle worldwide was the demand for the legalisation of abortion. Although this struggle has been developed around the right to an abortion, essentially this struggle is about women's rights and the freedom to make decisions about her body. In Argentina, where a huge movement was born from this struggle, women gained a major victory. In Poland, where the right of abortion is already seriously restricted, the government abolished the law which allows abortion in cases where there are serious health issues for the foetus. In response women in Poland held the biggest protest actions seen in the country since the fall of the Soviet Union. Inspired by the Icelandic women's strike in 1975, Polish women rose against the right-wing regime by going on strike.

In Brazil, where the fascist misogynist Bolsonaro is in power, the struggle of women for the legalisation of abortion was made more difficult. Women who become pregnant as result of rape are forced to report the rape in detail to the police. The current health minister Eduardo Pazuello is a former army general, appointed by Bolsonaro. Last August the hospitals in Espirito Santo State refused to offer a 10 years old girl who was made pregnant after



being raped by her uncle an abortion. Therefore she had to travel 900 miles for an abortion but an anti-abortion activist published her name and the hospital online. In front of the hospital, she was met by a demonstration against her in front of the hospital by an anti-abortion group.

Egypt is the Middle Eastern country with the highest sexual violence rate. According to studies nearly 99% of women in Egypt have experienced sexual violence on at least one occasion. Last year the trial a 21-year old private university student who is accused of sexual violence and rape in more than 100 cases began. After this case was made public, hundreds of victims of rape and abuse started to denounce the perpetrators and the hashtags #WeStandWithYou or #egyptianwomenrevolt were used to support the victims. Under social pressure, a law for the better protection of women from sexual violence was made but in reality its implementation favours the upper class. Victims of sexual violence are accused of staining the family honour.

Like in many other Asian countries incidents of rape are increasing in Bangladesh. While the number of officially registered rape cases was 732 in 2018, in 2019 this number nearly doubled to 1.413. Most rape cases are not reported to the police. Within the last year huge protests were held against rape and sexual violence against women. The government connects the rise of sexual violence and rape with pornography but an alliance called Intergenerational Feminists underlines that rape culture and masculine violence have deep roots. In October the government took a decision, which opened the way to punishing rapists with the death penalty. As a result 5 people who gangraped a 15-year old girl were given the death penalty. But women's activists and organisations do not agree with this court decision and do not believe in its implementation. On the contrary, they believe that the government aims to stop further protests and dissolve the movement with this decision.

2020 was the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This resolution aimed at addressing the situation of women in conflict. But very little progress has been made. Women only lead 7% of the world states. The representation of women in decision-making processes is still very low. Women are excluded from the field of peace and security. Afghan women had to experience this fact very concretely. The US is negotiating with a peace deal with the Taliban without including the Afghan people. As result hundreds of Taliban members were released from prison, which creates a big risk for Afghan women's lives. In Colombia the 'peace process' is misused for assassinating social leaders. The pandemic is used for increased attacks against unarmed communal self-defence groups. While indigenous people are not able to defend themselves, soldiers are raping girls and women from these communities. The same is happening in the Kurdish parts of

Turkey, where special forces are using rape as systematic weapon against Kurdish women.

The women's liberation movement of Kurdistan has faced numerous and systematic attacks in the past year by the Turkish state. In Kobane, members of Kongreya Star, the umbrella organisation of the Kurdish women's movement in Rojava, were killed in an targeted armed drone attack by the Turkish state. In Turkey hundreds of women's activists and politicians were first tortured and then arrested. In January the co-chair and her vice-chair of a people's council in North East Syria were kidnapped and then killed by ISIS. But the Kurdish women's liberation movement answers these increased attacks by launching campaigns against violence and occupation everywhere women are organised.

In the past year women gained many victories in the resistance against these patriarchal attacks, which appear in all parts of life. In Mexico, where 10 women per day on average are killed by men, women went on general strike against violence on March 8 last year, and by doing so provided an example to their sisters around the world. In Chile, where the constitution of the fascist dictator Pinochet will be changed, women will have equal representation in the new constitution commission. Women led the popular uprising, which lead to the decision for a new constitution.

In Belarus, where all opposition leaders are either in prison or in exile, women are leading the resistance against the misogynist dictator Lukashenko. Women have protested every Saturday since the fraudulent election. Furthermore three female candidates united in the elections against Lukashenko.

Two years ago women were leading the rebellion against dictator Omar al-Bashir in Sudan. Now they are organising under the name Protectors of the Revolution. Sudanese women are struggling against taboos and for protecting and increasing the gains of the revolution. Currently they are fighting for Female Genital Mutilation to be outlawed. The Scottish government made tampons and sanitary products free. In the US women's votes decided the election result and the number of female Congress and Senate members raised from 127 to 140. With these and other successes and gains, let us welcome this year's International Women's Day with a bigger fighting spirit. We need and we want to organise better, struggle more, raise the resistance. In this sense we say: Long live 8 of March! Long live women's confederal struggle! Long live our resistance! Jin! Jiyan! Azadî!





Ongoing campaigns of Kurdish women against patriarchal violence and occupation

Kurdish women have been struggling in an organised way against patriarchal violence and resisting occupation for decades. In 2020, the Kurdish women's movement organised a number of campaigns which are still ongoing.

Kurdish women organised under the umbrella of TJA (Tevgera Jinên Azad – Free Women's Movement) in Northern Kurdistan and Turkey launched the campaign "We defend ourselves" on September 15 last year. This campaign aims to challenge all kind of patriarchal and Turkish state violence against Kurdish women. The campaign runs under four headings, which are: Organising, mother tongue (against repression on the Kurdish language), education and action.

KJK (Komalên Jinên Kurdistan – Kurdistan Women's Communities), which is the main umbrella organisation of the Kurdish Women's Liberation Movement, launched a campaign under the slogan "Time to Defend the Free Woman and Society Against Feminicide" on September 22. KJK drew attention to a special concept of attacks and annihilation against Kurdish women, and stated they will counter this concept with an organised campaign.

Kurdish women's groups in Southern (Iraqi) Kurdistan came together in the city of Sulaymaniyah to launch the Women's Initiative Against Violence and Occupation on October 5. This initiative aims to secure women's life against patriarchal violence and to protect Kurdish soil against Turkish state occupation. In its actions and statements the initiative underlines that occupation is not only happening militarily but that women's life is permanently occupied by the patriarchal system.

Women's organisations in Rojava and North and East Syria started the campaign "No to Occupation and Genocide! Together, let's defend Women and Life" on October 8. Kongreya Star, the umbrella organisation of Kurdish women in Rojava, launched campaign with 30 other women's groups. On January 11, the second stage of the campaign was announced. In this second stage women's organisations are denouncing the systematic feminicide, which is taking place in the Northern Syrian cities, which are under Turkish occupation.

Kurdish women organised in Europe under the umbrella of TJK-E (Kurdish Women's Movement in Europe) launched the signature campaign "100 Reasons to Prosecute Erdoğan for his Feminicidal Policies". It started on November 25 last year and will run until March 8, during which time at least 100,000 signatures will be collected. This signature campaign aims for the official recognition of feminicide as a crime against humanity and the prosecution of Turkish President Recep Erdoğan for the feminicides committed by his regime both inside and outside Turkey.