

The Khilafah : Protecting Women from Poverty and Enslavement

Summary of Speeches Delivered at **the International Women's Conference**

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Protecting Women
from Poverty and Enslavement
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Table of Contents

Opening Speech for the Conference: The Khilafah: Protecting Women from Poverty and Enslavement	1
Capitalism, the True Enemy of the Poor	3
21 st Century Enslavement of Women by the Free- Market	5
Empowerment OR Exploitation Through Employment? – Examining the Western Model of the Successful Woman	7
The Failure of the Moderate Islamic Model to Secure Women's Economic Rights	9
Challenging the Western Narrative of the Cause and Solution to the Poverty of Women	11
The Islamic Perspective on the Primary Role of Women and Female Employment	13
The Khilafah: The Only System to Protect Women from Poverty and Enslavement	15
A Warm Call to Action from Hizb ut Tahrir to the Daughters of the Muslim Ummah	17

The Khilafah: Protecting Women from Poverty and Enslavement

*By: Umm Fadhillah, Chairwoman of the Executive Committee
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With gratitude to Allah (swt) and with pride, the Muslimah of Hizb ut Tahrir present an International Women's Conference. This conference is the second time that we have succeeded in gathering Influential Muslimah from various Muslim countries. Previously the Muslimah of Hizb ut Tahrir held a similar conference in Tunisia, Africa in March 2012. Indonesia was chosen as a place of this conference because Indonesia is a Muslim country which is full of the Grace of Allah, has a large number of Muslims, vast land and abundant natural resources. And it is a must that the goodness of this country becomes a mercy to the world. In Indonesia, a blessed country with rich natural resources, there is a large number suffering poverty, approximately 29.13 million of people. This number is greater than the total population of Australia (21.5 million) and Malaysia (28.3 million). And 70% of the poor are women. Poverty has forced women i.e. mothers to work. And today in the Muslim world, millions of women are struggling every day to survive. Many South East Asian women become female migrant workers and some of them become laborers in their own country. The reality shows that migrant workers also become the victims of human trafficking. They face physical, psychological and financial exploitation.

Here, in their own country, the cases of female labor exploitation are not less tragic. Field data collected by the activists of Muslimah Hizb ut Tahrir Indonesia in West Java shows that in some cases, new employees have to pass a probation period of 3 months to 1 year with a non-shift system. They work about 8-9 hours/day paid with Rp. 600,000, whereas the minimum regional wage in Bandung in 2012 was in the range of Rp. 1.2 million/month. (Bandung is the capital city of West Java) They are promised to be recruited to become permanent employees, but there is no guarantee this promise will be granted. They even get a pay cut to Rp. 100.000/day if they are absent from work for any reason. Some of these women workers are not only physically and financially exploited, they are abused and their honour is violated. Women in different parts of the world, including in other Muslim countries face the same problem. It is clear, that these countries implement the democratic political system and a capitalist economy. This is a system that has generated mass poverty and political corruption in governance globally. In addition, capitalists present an

image of the working woman as a positive status for women, and promote the idea that a woman who helps to alleviate poverty through her employment is a strong woman who can be freed from slavery to men. However, in reality they are trapped in endless oppression and have become slaves to the economy.

Almost all of the world's potential natural resources that are necessary for all human needs are in Muslim countries including Indonesia. Unfortunately, each of these countries manages its natural resources for its own self-interest rather than in the interest of the whole Muslim Ummah. Moreover, capitalist states have been allowed to expropriate the valuable natural resources of the region, robbing the people of the Muslim world of their wealth. This is a result of the betrayal of the Muslim rulers against their own people. Allah (swt) clearly explains in the Quran,

((وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعَمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ))

“And Allah puts forward the example of a town (Makkah) that dwelt secure and well-contented: its provision coming to it in abundance from every place, but it (its people) denied the Favours of Allah (with ungratefulness). So Allah made it taste extreme of hunger (famine) and fear, because of that (evil) which they (its people) used to do.” [TMQ An-Nahl 16: 112].

The leaders of the Muslim countries, including Indonesian, have adopted systems from other ideologies besides Islam to manage their country. It is one of the biggest acts of disobedience against Allah and His Favours. Consequently, Allah imposes starvation and fear caused by adopting a system which is kufr. The reality of the Muslim lands today shows the truth of His Word. Allah (swt) says,

((وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى))

“But whoever turns away from My Reminder (That is, neither believes in the Qur'an nor acts on its orders) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection.” [TMQ Ta-Ha 20: 124]

There is no answer to free ourselves from this oppression except to immediately adopt the Shariah of Islam - The Law of Allah (swt). It is implemented by the institution of the Khilafah. This conference will present the Khilafah as a model of governance which embodies an elevated perspective on the status of women as well as offering sound economic policies to release mankind from the shackles of poverty, create economic prosperity, and end women's exploitation - removing their suffering and bringing real change to their lives.

Capitalism, the True Enemy of the Poor

By: Fika M. Komara, M.Si (Member of The Central Media Office
of Hizb ut Tahrir for South East Asia)

Poverty, hunger and fear are the result of a society that denies the Favours of Allah, and the modern-day denial of Allah's favours is the implementation of the toxic Capitalist ideology and system across our Muslim lands. This ideology has a very dangerous inherent nature in its values, economic, or political system and poverty will continue to be created and maintained for the survival of this ideology. Capitalism has a big contribution in creating the selfish and exploitative society where individuals do not care if their happiness and freedom is obtained through the suffering of others. Three of its fundamental values are: **(1) Secularism**, as the basis of life, **(2) Pragmatism**, as the concept of life, and **(3) Hedonism**, as the meaning of happiness. These values are some of the triggers of disparity and poverty, due to the climate of competition or '*survival of the fittest*' where the strong and rich win in fulfilling their desires while the weak and poor are forced to suffer without even their basic needs met. Placing the pursuit of individualistic desires and pleasures as the measure of success or happiness naturally creates a dangerous environment in society. It fuels crime, exploitation, and a mindset of securing personal economic gain regardless of the impact on others such as generating widespread poverty.

Capitalism also has principles and economic pillars that consistently create structural poverty. These principles are very effective in exploiting the wealth of Muslim countries and become a mechanism for the mass exploitation of millions of the poor in this world. Some dangerous economic principles of capitalism which are the basis for economic exploitation are: **(1) freedom of ownership**, **(2) laissez-faire** –minimum interference of the government in society **(3) focus on economic growth over distribution of wealth**, **(4) capital accumulation** as the key to growth, and **(5) the iron wage system**. Under these principles, Capitalism has legalized mass dehumanization and marginalization of the poor by hiring them as labourers and practicing modern enslavement by sucking the energy of poor workers for the sake of securing high profits for investors and corporations. The adverse effect of these capitalist principles has been visible with economic disparity and desperate poverty dominating states under its rule. They have created wealth for the few while the masses go hungry and poor. And it happens not only in Muslim countries, but also in Western capitalist states and countries which are barometers of economic power such as China and India. All of the facts show that the capitalist system that is often

praised by the West, has failed miserably.

Despite all this, the rulers of Muslim countries proudly implement and praise this system of capitalism. This is not surprising as these rulers are actually the remnants of colonial Western capitalist countries. They embraced the Western idea of nationalism and maintaining independent nation-states that was part of the strategy of the West to divide the Muslim Ummah by dismantling the Khilafah Uthmaniyah in Turkey in 1924. Today Muslim countries interact with one another based upon the harmful principle of securing national interests. What happened between Indonesia and Malaysia is a very worrying portrait. The two neighboring Muslim countries have had decades of agreements to perpetuate the transnational exploitation of millions of Muslim women in the name of the national interests of both countries. This nationalism and the nation-state system they believe in has led to the destruction of the dignity of the Ummah and caused its disunity, as well as dehumanizing those who are from other nations, with Muslim women treated as commodities.

The world and its women are in need of a new political vision and system that protects humanity from poverty and exploitation. Islam is diametrically different from capitalism. It is as an ideology that strongly opposes the values of materialism and hedonism. Rather it generates mentalities that seek attaining the Pleasure of Allah over fulfilling their own personal desires, based upon the understanding that the purpose of life is to secure the best for the Hereafter rather than just secure material interests of the here and now. In addition, Islam also has principles that generate a healthy economy such as rejecting the flawed interest-based financial model of capitalism, banning hoarding of wealth or privatization of natural resources and prohibiting large foreign investments in the development of infrastructure, agriculture, or industry. Islam also has a clear and unequivocal view related to regulation of ownership, the role of the state, and labor-related laws that will prevent the exploitation of the weak by the strong. All this is implemented by the Khilafah system that has proven historically its ability to lift women in the Muslim world from the pain of poverty and create sustainable economic prosperity. It is this state alone that will be the true champion of the poor and defender against exploitation and enslavement.

((وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى))

Allah (swt) says, **“And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind.”** [TMQ Taha 20: 124]

21st Century Enslavement of Women by the Free-Market *By: Umm Musab (Member of The Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir for the Indian Subcontinent)*

It is important to understand that the economic hardship we face today is not a coincidence, the result of a natural disaster, or a punishment from Allah (swt) as many Muslim leaders try to convince us of. Rather it is a result of man-made policies and flawed and unjust organization of economies and societies by man-made systems, and predominantly by the detrimental Capitalist system and its free-market economy. Allah (swt) has bestowed this world with abundant resources and wealth. It is the unjust division of these resources by the capitalist policies and system that has concentrated wealth in the hands of the few elite while the poor majority is left in hunger and utter poverty. According to the 1998 UNDP report, if the 225 richest people in the world were taxed only 4 % this would be enough to fulfill the basic needs of food, water, education and healthcare of all the developing countries.

Freedom of ownership, free-market policies, and capitalism's interest-based model of finance has enslaved our lands and the daughters of this Ummah to Western states and corporations and exposed them to horrendous levels of exploitation. The capitalist agreements signed by the rulers and leaderships of the Muslim world with the IMF, World Bank, other global institutions, and foreign governments have directly caused the day-to-day financial hardship and struggle for survival facing women across the region. The interest-based economy that our countries implement, as well as the interest-based loans taken from the IMF, World Bank or other Western states, has crippled our economies. For example, the Egyptian government spends 63% of its revenue in debt repayment, most of which is payment of interest on loans. With so much of the revenue of Muslim governments being spent on debt repayment, what is left for feeding the people, education, healthcare, or building the infrastructure of the country? These loans also come with conditions and a whole set of capitalist free-market prescriptions for economic reform that manipulate the economy of debtor states to secure maximum benefit for foreign powers and corporations while simultaneously destroying economies in the Muslim world.

Under freedom of ownership and the free-market economy, important resources such as oil, gas, electricity, minerals, and even water that are vital needs for the people of any state are permitted to be privatized. This has left the people of the Muslim world exposed to the actions of greedy corporations who charge extortionate prices for the basic necessities of a community such as

electricity, gas, fuel, and even water. In Morocco for example, the price of water increased three-fold after water services were privatized in Casablanca. Trade liberalization and trade agreements such as GATT have led to the flooding of domestic markets with cheap products from Western states, such that local businesses and farmers are unable to compete with respect to price, leading to the destruction of local trade and traders, pushing the people of the Muslim world further into poverty. Alongside all this, trade liberalization and the deregulation of various trade rules under the free-market economy has allowed multinational corporations to do business in the Muslim world at low production costs and exploit cheap labour for huge profits. This has had a disastrous impact upon the lives of women as can be seen by the multinational corporation run garment factories in Bangladesh. Women account for 90% of the 3 million workers employed in the country's garment export industry and they face the most atrocious levels of exploitation.

Such lack of care of human life and dignity for the sake of securing profit margins is the defining characteristic of the capitalist system whose free-market economy has created a modern day slave-market of women in the Muslim world. And it is the governments and rulers of the region who have facilitated this exploitation in our lands and the robbing of our resources by private businesses or Western states. Such enslavement can never be broken until we reject the policies of the free market economy and all ideals, principles, and laws of the capitalist system which are based on the dictates of human beings rather than the Commands of the Lord of the Worlds (swt). It is only by trusting in Allah (swt) completely and depending upon his system alone in how we organize our economy, society, and state and manage the wealth and resources of the world that poverty can be solved, as Allah (swt) has said,

((وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آقَامُوا التَّوْرَىٰ أَوْ الْإِنْجِيلَ مَا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ مَنْرًا لَّيُهِمَّنْ رَبُّهُمْ لَكُلُوا مِن قَوْعِهِمْ وَاذْكُرُوا يَوْمَ تُنْفَخُ الْأَشْجَارُ وَمِمَّا يُبْتِغَىٰ مِنْهَا ثَمَرَاتُهَا يُكَلِّفُ الْفَاكِرَ مِنْكُمْ شَقَاقًا وَيُكَلِّفُ الْغَنَىٰ مِنْكُمْ كَثِيرًا ذَٰلِكُمْ كِتَابٌ مُّحْتَمَلٌ))

“And if only they had acted according to the Taurat, the Injeel, and what has now been sent down to them from their Lord (the Qur'an), they would have surely gotten provision from above them and from underneath their feet.” [TMQ Al-Maida 5:66]. The system of Allah, the Khilafah, serves the needs of humanity and not the elite few, reflected in its just economic system that includes the rejection of interest that creates a one-track flow of money to those with wealth at the expense of the masses. Our salvation as Muslim women lies in embracing this system alone, that will lift the hardship caused by capitalism from the daughters of this Ummah, and establish for them financial security and economic prosperity.

Empowerment OR Exploitation Through Employment? Examining the Western Model of the Successful Woman

*By: Imrana Mohammed (Member of The Central Media Office
of Hizb ut Tahrir)*

Today the prevalent view of the successful woman is based upon the Western model of the successful *working* woman who is financially independent, pays her own bills, and does not need a man to support her. The Western model of the successful *working* woman who apparently 'has it all' has been advertised to many generations of women internationally. We see these images in the media, and in the words of famous people like Michelle Obama who has stated in many interviews that there is no conflict for women in having a job, managing children, husband and having free time. In short the working woman is portrayed to be the epitome of Empowerment, Respect and Happiness. So many women – in the West and Muslim world – therefore aspire to this model of success or feel pressure to pursue employment or a career to feel valued in their family or within their society. In addition, there are numerous programs today across the Muslim world to get women into the workplace as a means of ending poverty and empowering Muslim women. So the question is - Is the profile of the Western working woman really a model for Muslim women to follow? And does this push for women to enter employment really empower women or exploit them?

In truth, all talk of women's empowerment through employment by Western states is driven by the capitalist agenda of securing economic gain rather than improving the lives of women. Hiliary Clinton in a speech at a Conference in Peru in October 2011 stated, "*Restrictions on women's economic participation are costing us massive amounts of economic growth and income in every region of the world. In the Asia Pacific for example, it's more than \$40 billion in lost GDP every year.*" So the call for more women in Indonesia and South East Asia to enter the workforce is less about improving the standard of living of individual women and more about the opportunity for Western capitalist states to cash in on those billions of dollars of potential revenue, and as many women globally enslaved in exploitative jobs increasingly recognise, it has not been empowerment through employment but exploitation.

Are women in the West more respected with employment? If so then why in the UK do over 50% of women experience sexual harassment in the workplace? In 2012, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard exposed the daily sexism she faced as a woman at the merciless hands of her male peers. So women may have power, education and money but they still fight epidemic levels of sexual harassment at work. Such degrading treatment of women is a direct result of capitalism's sanction of the exploitation of women's bodies for profit – an exploitation that continues to flourish within Western societies,

despite large numbers of women in the workforce. **Are women in the West more empowered with employment?** One of the most important aspects of women's empowerment is giving value to that which makes them unique to men, and this includes their important role as the child-bearers of humanity. However, within Western capitalist states, the man and his responsibilities and rights are constantly placed as the gold standard that women are expected to measure up to, including in the workplace. The consequence is that many women delay or avoid marriage or having children in order to climb the career ladder or even keep their job. Motherhood has therefore been devalued under capitalism which gives more value to wealth creation than creating and nurturing new life. Where's the empowerment in this? **Are women in the West more happy when in employment?** In a study of 30 European countries, published last year by the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology, researchers found that depression amongst women in Europe has doubled over the last 40 years due to the burden of having to balance family responsibilities with the heavy pressures of work.

In contrast to all this, although Islam permits the woman to work and pursue a career, it does not view or measure the success of a woman based upon her employment or how much money she makes for her family or state, rather upon her taqwa (God consciousness) and obedience to her Creator. It gives the woman a primary role in life as a wife and mother that is in accordance with her nature as the child-bearer of societies, rather than in contradiction with it, as well as bestowing great value and importance to her duty as the nurturer and educator of children and the future generation. It empowers her by obliging that she and her children be protected and provided for always by her male relatives or by the state, ensuring for her financial security. And finally, Islam empowers the woman by obliging that men view women with respect always, prohibiting her exploitation as well as enforcing harsh punishments, for the violation of her dignity. Alongside this, it provides a social system that regulates the relationship between men and women, to ensure that interaction between the genders in society is always conducted in a pure environment of mutual respect, and where their honour is safeguarded at all times, creating a safe environment for women to study, work, travel and engage in an active public life free from abuse, harassment, exploitation, or enslavement. This empowerment will only become a true reality for women under the Khilafah system that implements all the laws of Islam upon the society.

((وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ))

Allah (swt) says, **“And he who obeys Allah and His (Prophetic) Messenger, and has reverential awe of Allah, and keeps his duty (to Him): then these it is that are the successful.”** [TMQ An-Nur 24: 52]

The Failure of the Moderate Islamic Model to Secure Women's Economic Rights

By: Umm Khalid (Member of The Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir for Turkey and Asia)

Today capitalist, secular and democratic states, built upon non-Islamic ideas, are presented as winners to the whole world. Turkey is such a state and its current leadership, formed by the Islamic Justice and Development Party, presents its so-called “Moderate Islamic Model of Governance” as a *political and economic success story*. This success is also very often confirmed by important Western institutions and personalities like Hillary Clinton, who praised Turkey's economic progress as “remarkable” and therefore as an example to its neighbours in the Middle East and North Africa which are undertaking their own reforms.

However even a simple view at Turkey's economic numbers shows that its economy is a fragile, unsustainable success as it is dependent on foreign capital for growth and therefore dependant on the mercy of foreign investors who can pull their money out of the country at a whim, exposing the state to volatile cycles of economic growth. Beyond the glossy exterior of the country's economic growth lies a weak economic foundation and principles as well as the characteristic fall-out of the capitalist system upon which it is based. Turkey, as with all other capitalist states is an economy run on debt and interest. Its external debt is over \$306 billion. Its public debt is 40% of GDP. It is indisputable that any economy run on debt, as we have seen with European states and the US in this global crisis, is like a pack of cards ready to fall at any time. This therefore can never be a system that can give women financial security and stability. Today 12 million of Turkey's population lives under the poverty line - that's 16% of its population. The proportion of the population who have severe financial problems is about 60%. Unemployment is running around 10%. Low income families do not even have enough to afford sufficient nutritional needs, and according to the OECD, the gap between the rich and poor is rapidly widening. This is therefore a system as with all capitalist systems that has failed to match economic growth with economic justice and equity of wealth.

In addition, the capitalist idea that improving the wealth and welfare of women is only possible through their employment has unfortunately become a dominant view in Turkey. Many women feel that they do not have another option than to work, even under miserable, slave-like conditions. According to Eurostat many Turkish women have to work more than 48 hours a week (nearly 7 days each week) in order to provide for their families or to afford more than just the basic needs. Working for so many hours usually indicates the low quality, low payment and hard working conditions of the jobs. According to

research, nearly 5 million women, this is about 57 % of working women do not have adequate employment rights. This is an ideology where generating wealth speaks louder than human suffering. In addition to economic exploitation, women in Turkey face additional forms of exploitation that result from capitalism's view of the woman as a commodity. For example, their bodies are exploited in the business, advertising, and entertainment industries to increase profits, which has led to their devaluing within society and escalating levels of violence and violation of their honour. Over a 7 year period from 2002 to 2009, there was a 1,400% rise in murders of women in Turkey. This is the nature of capitalism, namely to maximise profits at the expense of women's dignity and rights. Furthermore, Turkey's constitutional secular principle of banning headscarves in schools and all public buildings, which is still continuing under this “moderate Islamic-secular government,” has laid open the door to the economic exploitation of Muslim women who are forced to accept employment in low-paid jobs and work long hours in poor conditions for financial survival, as they are unable to secure good quality, well-paid work while wearing their Islamic dress.

Turkey's praised economic, democratic and secular so-called success is nothing more than a mirage. It illustrates how the moderate Islamic model of mixing a handful of Islamic traditions with a system shaped primarily upon the secular belief and democracy has failed spectacularly in safeguarding the economic rights, wellbeing and dignity of women. It is no “Role-Model” worthy of being emulated by the Muslim world. In looking for solutions Muslims all over the world should trust in Allah (swt) and His Words,

((أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَىٰ تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُيُوتَهُ عَلَىٰ شِقَا
جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَاتَّهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ))

“Which then is best? - He who laid the foundation of his building on piety to Allah and His good Pleasure? Or he who laid the foundation of his building on the edge of a bank ready to crumble to pieces...” [TMQ At-Tauba 9: 109] And indeed, when the foundation of Turkey was based upon the Laws of Allah (swt) alone under the Uthmani Khilafah, the life of its women was blessed with dignity and honour as recorded in thousands of historical documents, and records from its Sharia Courts. Their right to acquire and sell property, trade, run businesses, work in jobs where they had good employment rights, and importantly their right to financial maintenance were all guaranteed. Islam has secured women rights through a perfect system, so it is shameful that the Turkish government continues to advocate a man-made system to the world, knowing the injustice, poverty, and oppression that women have suffered under such systems globally.

Challenging the Western Narrative of the Cause and Solution to the Poverty of Women

By: *Umm Yahia Mohamed (Member of The Central Media Office, Hizb ut Tahrir for Africa)*

We live in an age which is characterized with mass poverty and where women are the poorest of the poor. It is a problem that calls for a solution but not any solution; rather a real one. If we consider the various solutions that have been offered to address this dire problem of poverty affecting women, we find that in the main they fall into one of the following categories: improving women's education; increasing the employment of women; population control; and empowerment of women through increasing opportunities for female political leadership.

Is Education the way out of poverty? Girls' education was identified as a key development tool in September 1990 at the World Summit for Children (UNICEF, 1990) with UNICEF declaring in 2005 that *“None of the Millenium Development Goals will likely be met unless there is significant progress in girls' education.”* There are countless projects throughout the third world that are set up to alleviate poverty through educating girls. These projects have improved the education of some girls (especially in rural areas), for example, there is a significant improvement in eradicating illiteracy in some parts of the Muslim World. In Tunis, the general illiteracy rate reduced from 27% to 19% of the total population in ten years and this included a drop in female illiteracy. However, did this stop Mohamed Bouazizi from igniting the Arab spring? Was Bouazizi himself illiterate? In Palestine official figures indicate that illiteracy was reduced to a mere 4.7%, and the city with the lowest illiteracy rate is Gaza (one of the poorest spots in the world). The reality therefore is that education in parts of the Muslim world, including female education has seen an improvement while poverty has only increased. This in no way belittles the importance of education for women and girls. However, those who believe that education alleviates poverty should visit the tea and coffee houses through the Muslim world. They would see graduates, some with high level university degrees, waiting for suitable job opportunities.

Is the Employment of Women the way out of poverty? Throughout the Muslim world, many small community- based projects have been established to get women into work, based upon the assertion that employment is the route out of poverty. Morocco is one of the countries that has taken the lead in this area. The employment records of Morocco show that female employment has increased during the past decade but much of it has been unregulated labour with low wages, including for graduates. The country has also seen an increase in women struggling to repay loans that they have taken

out to finance businesses. Similarly, across the Muslim world many women are in employment but still live in poverty. In addition, the labour market in the Muslim world lacks strategy and planning to the extent that higher education is held against the job seeker. The labour market is heavily based on Western foreign labour and takes away jobs from local people. Employment has therefore not taken the millions of women in the region suffering from poverty out of their miserable state of financial hardship.

Is Population Control the way out of Poverty? In many Muslim countries such as Tunisia there has been a decrease in the number of children per household but an increase in poverty. Between the years 1980 and 2010, the fertility rate in Morocco reduced from 6 to 2.4 children for every adult woman, yet poverty has reached an alarming level in the country. Furthermore, while a large population is seen as a major economic force in many of the emerging markets such as China and India, it is presented in our countries as a cause of poverty. So this is a flawed argument that is based on Western capitalist economics and has no place in Islam, for as Muslims we believe that Allah is the Sustainer and Provider and He (swt) has created Rizq (provision) that is sufficient for all.

Is Empowerment of Women through Political Leadership the way out of poverty? There are many countries in the world that have had female prime ministers and leaders such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka and Turkey and yet under the rule of these women, the poverty affecting millions of women within these states was not alleviated. In addition, there are many countries in the Muslim world such as Sudan, Iraq, and Afghanistan that have higher quotas for women in parliament than many Western states, yet the economic situation facing women in these lands is dire. It is therefore clear that having more women in positions of legislative power or political leadership is not the means to address poverty.

All of these Western-inspired solutions to the poverty affecting women in the Muslim world are flawed. Rather it is the nature of the system that is implemented upon a state that determines the quality of the economic life of its people. It is only through implementing the system of Allah (swt) upon our lands that poverty can be solved.

((قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ ۚ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ ۚ أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُتَّبَعَ أَمْ لَا يَهْدِي ۚ إِنَّا أَنْ يَهْدَىٰ ۖ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ))

Allah (swt) says, “Say It’s Allah who guides to the truth. Is then He Who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who finds not guidance (himself) unless he is guided? Then, what is the matter with you? How do you judge?” [TMQ Yunus 10: 35]

The Islamic Perspective on the Primary Role of Women and Female Employment

By: *Om Sohayb Alshami (Member of The Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir)*

Islam raised the status of women, and gave her enduring rights for as long as the Islamic rules were implemented, and gave her care in all aspects of her life, lifting from her the burden of earning her daily living and putting that on the shoulders of men, even if she enjoyed abundance of wealth, as this Nafaqah is her right from her male guardian and it is not a charity from him, for Allah (swt) says,

((الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ))

“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth.” [TMQ An-Nisa 4:34] It is therefore an obligation on her “Wali Amr” (guardian) to provide for her in all circumstances and when she does not have this Wali Amr, her Nafaqah is an obligation on the state. So she is honoured in all aspects of her life and during all ages of life and she stayed like this as long as the Islamic State existed; the Islamic State that implemented Allah's rules on earth. Yes, the woman in Islam is a mother and a wife and an honour to be protected because that is her main role that should not suffer as a result of other roles. This role that she bears a great responsibility over, namely raising children and bringing forward men and women who are a source of goodness for the State, does not forbid her from gaining an education and pursuing work if she chooses. She can practice in many jobs and professions as long as there is no conflict with her nature and her primary role and no conflict with the Islamic rules. She is also permitted to engage in the same economic transactions as men.

The woman is half the society and she is the man's partner in life, but today due to the absence of the Khilafah and the hegemony of the capitalist system, her working became a necessity. Many women now work as the sole breadwinner as a result of the death of her husband or father, or divorce or abandonment. The capitalist view is that Islam's concept of the primary role of the woman as a mother and homebuilder lessens her and limits her role and her status, but in reality it is capitalism that lessens her and views her as a consumer of goods and services. In order to fulfill this role she needs her own source of income through her work. Capitalism also views her as a commodity rather than a human being and seeks to exploit her femininity by actions that humiliate her dignity as a means to market goods. The issue of diverting the role of women from their true role of raising generations, building the Islamic Shakhsiyyah of their children, and bringing forth heroes who are the devoted servants of Allah

has been a central preoccupation for the West and their agents as they know that by this they will destroy a whole generation of potential workers for Islam and the Khilafah. The West uses many ways to introduce corrupt concepts to achieve this aim. For example, the girl is raised by a culture that promotes the idea that her primary focus in life should be based on her career, rather than motherhood and housework, and that her financial security and strength lies in her employment and having an independent income equal to the man. Her relationship with men therefore became competitive such that it affected the house, the children, and the whole society.

What helped this Western agenda of reconstructing the thinking of the Muslim woman were governments that submitted to the Western instructions in amending the education curricula to match with gender equality and the feminist agenda. The corrupted media also helped promote this Western ideal by presenting programs, films and soaps to reinforce destructive concepts that promote work rather than marriage, children, and home-duties as the primary responsibility of women. And let's not forget the role of Western organizations and international treaties such as CEDAW that are also poison pills that use deceitful language such as freedom, civilization, modernity, and women and children's rights as a way to deviate Muslim women away from their Deen. The consequence of all this is that many women delay marriage till a late age or avoid it all together while others delay having children, have only a few children or none at all for they view motherhood as an obstacle to their work or career. In Tunisia they implemented the agreement for equality between men and women in work and labour. The consequence is that the woman carries the burden of having to fulfill both her traditional role as wife and mother as well as the man's role as breadwinner to the point of exhaustion. So we see her jumping between her role and his role at great cost to herself instead of enjoying the privilege of her right to be provided for, given to her by Islam.

The Khilafah rules by Allah's laws and cares for its citizens; and in its absence, poverty and need has spread and the man is no longer able to provide for his family and that is also what forced the woman to go out to work. Women have begun to stand in long queues at the gates of the charity organizations or at the doors of the mean rulers that sucked out the wealth of the Ummah and left people suffering in hunger and poverty. Omar ibn al Khattab, the Khaleefah of the Muslims, when he used to give people from the Bayt al Maal (Central Treasury) and someone said to him, Jazak Allah Khayr yaa Amir Al Mumineen - he replied, "What's wrong with them? We give them their right and they think it's a gift from us!" We need Khalifahs like this once again and we need prosperity, justice and security under the rule of the Khilafah.

The Khilafah: The Only System to Protect Women from Poverty and Enslavement

By: *Iffah Ainur Rochmah (Spokeswoman of Hizb ut Tahrir Muslimah Indonesia)*

The Khilafah is a general leadership of all Muslims in the world that implements the Islamic laws and carries the Islamic Dawah to mankind. It is a system that takes care of the problems of the people and protects them from the dangers that threaten them. The Khilafah is the model of governance obligated by Allah (swt) and upon which the establishment of other Islamic obligations within society depends. Its establishment is one of the highest obligations assigned by Allah (swt). He (swt) says,

((وَأَنْ أَحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ))

“And so judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they turn you away from even part of what Allah has sent down to you.” [TMQ al-Maida 5: 49]

In its Draft Constitution of the Islamic State based upon the Shariah, Hizb ut Tahrir has prepared a detailed description about the structure of the Khilafah and its ability to generate welfare for the people, both women and men, as well as how it will protect women from exploitation and secure their dignity in society. The Khilafah guarantees to meet all the needs of the people, with mechanisms and systems that illustrate that it is a **'servant' of the people, and not just a 'government'**. Article 121 of this Draft Constitution states, ***“The State must guarantee full satisfaction of the individual's basic needs. The State must make opportunities available to have every individual satisfy his luxuries to the highest possible level.”*** The fulfillment of the basic needs of every woman is achieved with the following strategies: **Firstly**, it is an obligation for all men to work to provide the basic needs of women who are under their responsibility. The state must therefore provide jobs for the people, either by a direct or indirect approach. The State can directly create jobs through development projects. When natural resources are controlled by the state and not left to the private sector, jobs will be easily generated. This is what will happen if the Islamic economic system is applied. Indirectly, the state creates a good, healthy and conducive business climate by having an easy, fast and free administrative system as well as by prohibiting hoarding and usury that prevent the effective circulation of wealth and inhibit investment and job creation. The Khilafah will also provide technical assistance, training, and capital to the people to enable them to make businesses or gain employment. In addition, the State will eliminate the non-real financial sector of the economy and rather invest heavily in the real economy of trade, agriculture and manufacturing,

giving a direct impact on the economy. **Secondly**, if a man is not physically able to meet the needs of himself and his family, this burden is transferred to his other male relatives. And **thirdly**, if he does not have such relatives who are able to shoulder this duty, then the responsibility of financially maintaining him and his family shifts to the state through the Baitul Mal (Central Treasury). The Prophet (saw) said:

"انا أولى بالمؤمنين من أنفسهم, من ترك مالا فإلهه, ومن ترك ديناً أو ضياعاً, فإلي, وعلي"

"I'm more important than the believers than themselves. Who leaves property behind it is for his family, and who leaves a debt or dependents, then it comes to me, and it is my duty." (Narrated by Ibn Hibban). Furthermore, only the Khilafah can optimize the collection of Zakat and distribute it effectively to the poor. In addition, the fulfilment of public needs such as education and healthcare is the duty of the state which provides them for the people without any charge. To finance all this, the Khilafah will utilize the state-owned assets as well as the revenue from the management of public property such as oil, gas, mining, forests and so on. The Muslim world is rich with resources and all of this is sufficient to fulfil the needs of every individual when the Islamic economic system is applied. Under this system, poverty will truly become history and no woman would have to struggle to meet her needs.

Alongside all this, the Khilafah is obliged to protect women from exploitation in all its forms – physical, financial, or sexual. Article 108 of the Draft Constitution states, ***"A woman is primarily a mother and a home maker. She is an honour that must be safeguarded."*** Women are not obliged to work but if they choose to, they deserve respectable employment that does not degrade their dignity. This includes prohibiting the exploitation of women's bodies. Other mechanisms of the Khilafah that protect women from exploitation includes firstly, implementing an education system that embeds the Islamic values in society that ensures the correct view of women amongst men is created and a morally elevated behaviour within its citizens nurtured; secondly, applying an economic system that prohibits all economic activities considered to be exploitative of others; thirdly, hosting a media that promotes the pure concepts to society, encouraging individuals to challenge corruption and vice within the state including acts of exploitation, rather than propagating vulgar images and ideas that cheapen the relationship between men and women; and finally, the Islamic judiciary system will impose heft punishments on any violation of women's dignity or wellbeing. The Muslim world will only reveal its prosperity where the needs of all people are met and women's honour protected when our lands are governed and cared for through implementing the whole of the Islamic Shariah under the Khilafah Rashida.

A Warm Call to Action from Hizb ut Tahrir to the Daughters of the Muslim Ummah

By: Dr. Nazreen Nawaz (Member of The Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir)

Dear sisters and distinguished guests, Allah (swt), the Lord of the Worlds has honoured you as women. You are the ones who the Prophet (saw) described your worth as more precious than all the treasures of the world. Islam obliged that you enjoy a life of financial security - to be cared and provided for always by the men of society or the state, so that you should not struggle a single day to feed yourselves and your families, and blessing you with a Deen that gave you the right to work but in a safe and dignified manner – free from exploitation or abuse. Allah (swt) showered you with yet more of His unlimited Mercy by blessing our Muslim lands with the most abundant of resources such that the daughters of this Ummah should not suffer a single day of financial hardship. With all this, how can it be today that millions of the honourable daughters of Islam face desperate poverty and back-breaking economic exploitation? This hardship, injustice, and oppression are the result of embracing laws and systems in our lands which are not based upon the Quran and Sunnah, including embracing the toxic capitalist system.

Western capitalist states have been selling an illusion to the world - that this corrosive capitalist ideology, that places securing wealth creation over all other values in life - is the best system by which to establish economic stability and prosperity for women. And yet its debt-fuelled model of growth built on greed and credit has led to volatile economies and caused the catastrophic global financial crisis. They claimed that its interest-based economic model and free-market policies could make poverty history. Instead, under the watch of this system, 3 billion people live on less than \$2 a day – due to a system whose defining characteristic has been concentrating wealth in the hands of the few while the masses go hungry and poor. In addition, capitalism has used the language of women's empowerment through employment to exploit women. It has pressured women to work to feel valued, equating her worth to her level of wealth creation, burdening her with being both the breadwinner and homemaker of the family. The American capitalist dream has become humanity's nightmare. The capitalist system has been an utter failure in organizing the affairs of mankind and securing the financial security and wellbeing of women. And yet today, the rulers and leaderships of the Muslim world continue to embrace, promote, and implement this failed system in our lands. These corrupt governments have worked hand in hand with Western powers to enslave our lands and its women to foreign governments and corporations.

It is now time for a new political and economic vision for the women of the Muslim world. There needs to be a new World Order that places securing human need over financial gain; a system that embodies sound economic policies, and that does not build its prosperity from the ruin of people; a state to which women globally can truly look to as a model by which to protect them from poverty and enslavement, and that views them as dignified human beings and not objects of wealth creation. It is the Khilafah system – a state built purely upon an Islamic constitution and the comprehensive application of Allah's Laws – that embodies this vision. This is a system that has a time-tested approach to solving poverty and creating economic prosperity through its Islamic economic system that rejects the interest-based free-market financial model. It understands that the key to eliminating poverty is not economic growth but fair distribution of wealth to ensure first and foremost that every citizen has their basic needs met. This is a system that will not accept that a single citizen go hungry for even a day, a system that will establish sustainable growth, create an economy built on wealth not debt, eliminate mass unemployment, and build a first-class free education and healthcare service. It is a system that will tear down the false borders between the Muslim lands, unifying the rich resources of the region and establish the state as a political and economic giant but graced with economic justice. And among all this, will be the women of the Khilafah – dignified, respected, empowered women; the centre of attention of the state with regards to their provision and care, living lives of financial security; women who work through choice not force with strict employment rights and a fair wage, working in a safe environment under the social system of Islam. Hizb ut Tahrir has the qualities and details to make this vision of the Khilafah a reality. So we at Hizb ut Tahrir call upon women throughout the world to carry this Dawah with us to reestablish the Khilafah that will achieve women's dignity, provide well-being and prosperity. Allah (swt) says,

((وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ (٣٣) لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (٣٤) لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ))

“And he who brings the Truth and he who confirms (and supports) it- such are the men who do right. They shall have all that they wish for, with their Rabb (Only Cherisher and Sustainer). Such is the reward of those who do good: so that Allâh will remit from them (even) the worst in their deeds and give them their reward according to the best of what they have done.” [TMQ Az-Zumar 39: 33-35]



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