

Press Release

Systematic Sexual Violence Against the Women of Sudan Elicits No Response in the Absence of a State That Cares About the Honour of the Muslim Woman

On Thursday 11th December, the organization, The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, reported it had documented almost 1300 incidents of sexual violence against women spanning 14 states in Sudan since the war started in the country in April 2023, with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) blamed for 87% of cases. It described sexual violence against women being used as a systematic weapon in the conflict, stating it was “*widespread, repeated, intentional and often targeted*”. Rape accounted for three-quarters of the documented incidents, while 225 cases involved children, some as young as 4 years old. Incidents occurred in homes, public spaces and also included long-term detention of women who were subjected to torture, gang-rape and forced marriage. On Sunday 7th December, Sudanese medical groups reported that dozens of children and women were sexually assaulted and raped while fleeing the capture of El Fasher in Darfur by the RSF this October. In May this year, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) reported that in the South Darfur region alone, its workers had treated 659 sexual violence survivors between January and March this year alone, more than two-thirds of whom had been raped. MSF Emergency Coordinator, Clair San Filippo, stated: “*Women and girls do not feel safe anywhere. They are attacked in their homes, when fleeing violence, getting food, collecting firewood, working in the field. They tell us they feel trapped.*”

What our sisters in Sudan have endured in this conflict are horrific beyond description, including being raped in front of their children and relatives and being subject to starvation, torture and all forms of inhumane treatment by militia. This systematic sexual violence echoes what our Palestinian sisters have endured in the prisons of the Jewish occupation; what our Rohingya sisters have suffered at the hands of Myanmar forces; what our Kashmir sisters have been subject to by Indian occupation soldiers; and what our Uyghur sisters have experienced in the concentration camps of the Chinese regime.

Our beloved Prophet (saw) demonstrated to the Muslims for all time, the immense value afforded to the dignity of the Muslim woman in Islam and the great importance of protecting this always - when he banished a whole Jewish tribe, Banu Qaynuqa from his state in Madinah due to their abuse of a single Muslim woman. The leaders of the Muslims of the past followed his example of defending the honour of the Muslim

woman, such as Khalifah Al-Mutassim who dispatched an army to rescue a single Muslim woman in Amuriyah, Turkiye, who was captured and abused by the Romans; and Khalifah al-Walid bin Abdul Malik who sent the great general, Muhammad ibn Qasim with a formidable army to rescue a group of Muslim women who were imprisoned by the oppressive Indian Hindu king, Raja Dahir.

So as an Ummah, how did we reach such a state where the honour of our sisters is violated on mass across the world, their bodies used as weapons of war, and yet this elicits no response from any state, ruler or army in the Muslim lands?!! The Prophet (saw) said: «الإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْنُونٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ» **“The Imam (Khalifah) of the people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects.”** Today, in the absence of the Khalifah (Caliphate) State, and the Islamic system over which he rules – the Khilafah based upon the method of the Prophethood – the Muslim woman has become prey to every corrupt force, regime and entity, with no guardian to protect her dignity and blood. The division of our lands into nation states, separated by artificial colonial-imposed borders, has made us fragmented and weak such that no state moves in defense of our sisters. As Muslims, it is not enough that we shed tears over the plight of our sisters, or feel pain over their ideal, we are obligated by Allah (swt) to work to establish the Khilafah which will end this nightmare that our sisters are enduring. So, raise the call with urgency for the return of the System of Allah (swt), that will unite our lands, our armies, our resources and place the protection of the honour of the believing women as a vital pillar of the state.

Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ﴾ **“And those who disbelieve are allies of one another, (and) if you (Muslims) do not do so (i.e. become allies, as one united block) there will be Fitnah on earth, and great corruption.”** [Al-Anfal: 73].

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