

Release

Zahra Al Ezzo

Further victims of crimes of "honor"

1 - "Freedom is a sacred right, and the State guarantees citizens' safeguard , the personal liberty, dignity and security" - article 25-Syrian Constitution, 2 – " the right of life, every human being has the right of life , and the law protects that right, and may be deprived of his life arbitrarily," the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights M. six No. 1

Violence against women with strategies of Beijing Declaration 1995 is : " any action that is violent or hurtful or insulting gender-based pay, committed in any way against the right of a woman, and the cause of harm to the physical or mental suffering including threats of such acts, coercion, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." . violence against women has many forms, means, such as depriving them of learning and work, not being involved with their marriage decision , physical

exploitation, rape, beatings and killings, which take place under the banner of the so-called "honor killings", and This is one of the worst forms of violence against women . those crimes are the murder of a woman (a wife , a mother , a sister or a relative ) on the pretext that she committed an "immoral not pleasing the community." . This is the most common crime in social structure, particularly in traditional communities in the suburbs or neighborhoods of cities . Here, we refer to the absence of accurate statistics, which tell us the number of women killed, as well as the lack of media attention to this phenomenon , through transferring details of such crimes from the moment of happening , to the arrest of criminals, to mentioning the reasons and factors leading up to, in order to increase the community's attention to make it not familiar to the common .

While we affirm that this act is a crime, it is because it has all the specifications of the criminal act resulting in a crime against a human being, with premeditation. Although the law and customs don't only cancel responsibility from the killer but it is also seen by these customs as a hero or a knight , the killer is highly appreciated and looked at , by the traditional social view , as if the killer was correct to act , because he saved his family or tribe of shame occurred . in addition to the moral and values justifications , where our culture, customs , values and the pressures of life, create a case of intense contradiction between "global call for the liberation of women and the right to work", and the call in a moment for killing her on the other hand. Apart from that , there are in the Syrian law a series of articles that give the committer of this crime either exemption from punishment or reduced to a negligible degree. This makes it easy for the killer, particularly since most of these crimes are committed for reasons other than the excuse made by the murderer, the motive of the killing might be to get rid of a family member to obtain the inheritance and dealing, or sometimes it is just for a decision marriage without the consent of the family, or to marry from outside the community to which they belong. In fact most of the criminals are males , and the victims are females .

Syria which was considered in 2005 the fifth state in the world and the fourth in Arab In recent years , crimes committed in the name of "defending the honor," increased in world that witnessed these types of crimes . the victims of this kind of crimes was dozens of women in 2006 , the last of which was what happened last Sunday January 21<sup>st</sup>

2007, in which a sixteen years old girl was killed , by her brother Fayez Al Ezzo. Zahra was kidnapped ( in purpose of marriage ) by a friend of the family in the province of Hassaka - northeast Syria . the whole family considered Zahra responsible for "desecrating" their honor . Although the person who kidnapped Zahra was sent to prison , she became a target that should be killed by the members of her family to remove the shame that she brought , so she escaped of death. And went to the "Institute for the Care of girls" in Damascus, which is managed by the "National Assembly for the development of women's role" with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. She stayed at the Institute for nine months for rehabilitation , and during this period she has been attempted to be killed. The first time was when her brother came with a "machete butcher" to kill her .

The second time was when her uncle came with "the knife" in his hands . Each time the institute administration was able to address the problem . on the first day of Eid Al-Adha Zahra left the institute as bride for her 23 aged cousin Fawwaz . her father attended her wedding after giving a pledge to the Judge of Hassaka that he will not harm her, and her mother and sister also attended the wedding . But after a month of her marriage, her brother came to visit her, and then spent two days weekend in her home , eating , drinking and staying with them ! joking and laughing . So that he did not leave any doubt in his intentions, even on the morning of Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup>

, 2007, her husband ( fawwaz ) wore his clothes and went to work, leaving his wife and her brother in the home, believing that the matter has been resolved . when Zahra's Brother got up , carrying the PRESSURE of the culture that accused him and his family shame (which is also a victim of culture, customs and values), he took out his knife and stabbed Zahra four stabs deep in the back reaching the lung. And another last one deep in the neck and ran away . When the crime was discovered after some time , Zahra had bled a lot. It was moved to ( Al Mujtahid ) hospital in Damascus on the brink of death. And placed in the intensive care . she did not complete a day in hospital.

Yes , Zahra Al Ezzo uncovered our culture underdevelopment , and exposed the brutality of some of our local old traditions . it also showed the injustice practiced on women by our society and our culture . What happened to Zahra Al Ezzo is a first degree classified murder , because of the availability of all elements of the crime :

1 - moral component : the clear will to carry out this heinous crime , for they have been planning to commit it more than nine months before the offender, the killer brother , his

since the first visit paid by the killer at the Institute .father, his uncle and his other uncle .

□ 2 - material Component : a sharp tool used to kill the victim and several fatal stab wounds all over her body. And this applies to the crime occurred in the Syrian Penal Code Article 211 : " crime □ articles : Article 209 : which □ identify and punish those in charge of a crime ( 1 - one can't be judged to death , unless he did it on awareness and willingness committer is the one who presents the elements constituting the crime □ , or contributes to the implementation." Article 216 : "1 - The instigator of committing a crime , or the one who tried to carry another person by any means to commit a crime." Article 217 : "1 - the instigator is punished the same as the criminal, whether it is done or unfulfilled or incomplete." . Article 218 : "it is considered as an intervener : A- who □ provides guidance for the perpetration , even if this guidance didn't lead to commit □ the act. B – who enforces the determination of the offender by any means . D - who helped the offender or assisted on acts that created the crime or facilitated or completed acts that were committed. Article 219 : "1- the intervener, who without his help the crime couldn't have been committed , is to □ be punished as if he did the same role."

what allows the continuation and repetition of such brutal crimes, and always allowed to aggravate the problem inside and outside the home , and solutions are always at the expense of women are :

1- absence of laws providing for the protection of women from violence in the event of exposure to discrimination or physical and sexual violence or harassment in the workplace  
2 - lack of □ legal actions to punish the perpetrators of such acts. 3- absence of legal protection for women victims of violence in general and victims of a so-called rape at home.  
The state itself is □ helping the "crimes of honor" in particular. 4 - lack of safe shelters for them , but on the contrary the existence of laws that allow honor killings citizens in their "wrong" way to understand "honor" as a concept and value, and therefore the State become involved by giving "moral" background or execution . To commit the crime of honor killing is practically outside the bounds of the laws qualified to control the community □ , and it is also away from the relationship between the State and its citizens, which must embody justice through fair laws. We point out here that Article 548 of the Syrian Penal Code, which is considered by some people as the protector of "honor" , had been set in 1949 . since that time, murderers benefit from it to exempt from punishment, and it is regrettable that the Syrian legislature contradicts himself , where the adoption of honor crimes, and extremism to give legitimacy, and not to punish the criminal .  
this article states in its first paragraph : " benefits from the excuse who finds his wife or one of his relatives or his sister in an offense known for adultery or sexual sin that links with another person , to kill or harm one or both of them unintentionally." This article allows : 1- discharge of the full penalty. 2 – eased punishment from (6) to (3) months or three years as a maximum.

No one □ benefits from this article but men, as for a woman who attempts to kill her husband or one of her relatives for same honor reasons do not benefit from this article . (there

is an actual real example happened when a mother of three children killed her husband as an anger reaction controlled her when she found her husband raping their daughter ) , but she had not benefited from the article 548 and sentenced to hard labor for a term of 12 years then reduced to 9 . We are not calling for impunity of women from penalty , but we are referring to strongly discrimination between the right of women and men , as well as to the cause of Article 548 and being improper, and that the second paragraph of this article is " the criminal or the one who committed the crime or harm benefits from the mitigating excuse if he catches his wife or one of his ascendants or descendants or sister in a suspicious situation with another. " The Syrian legislature gave the killer motivated by "honor" , this extraordinary concession to justice!. Where this law has become a real threat to family ties and its strength. In addition to the formation of a clear contradiction between Article 548 and the core of the law and its judicial power tool, which alone has the right upon them , rather than assigning this task to individuals . This article is an instigator of to rule on the citizens when they commit a mistake, and the application of punishment such crimes for its clear leniency with punishments relating to "honor crimes" and manipulating the interpretation and application of the above-mentioned article. We refer to some other legal materials in this regard :

-Article 192 : (If the judge saw that the motive was honest , he gives the following penalties : DETENTION of life imprisonment instead of execution - fifteen years imprisonment instead of of hard labor imprisonment – simple imprisonment instead of imprisonment with hard labor . (this article which is giving an eased penalty a if the crime was motivated or committed by a "honest" motive , did not specify what motive gives the right to men in the family to engage in violence against women (killing or harming) on the pretext of "honest" motive . isn't this article a sufficient reason for the violence against women within the family?.

And related to the following articles : B Article 239 - : "We do not excuse the crime except in cases mentioned by the law." C Article 240 - : 1 convenient exemption exempt criminal from punishment. 2 but the criminal can be treated by means of reform measures and precautionary measures, except isolation

D-Article 241 : 1 when the law provides for lightening excuse : if the act is a felony requires penalty of life imprisonment with hard labor or life imprisonment , the penalty is converted to imprisonment of at least one year. And if the act constitutes one of the other crimes , then it should requires penalty of imprisonment of six months to two years. If the act is a misdemeanor , the penalty shall not exceed six months and it can be converted to an evaluative one . And if the act is a violation , Judge can decrease or lighten the penalty . The criminal who committed his crime in a state of anger due to a dangerous and not right act done by the victim , benefits from the eased excuse .This article gives an to a half . eased excuse to the felony committer who commits his crime in a state of anger . The felony then is turned to a misdemeanor , and the penalty is eased to a big extent . The reason for commutation here is that the felony committer has done his crime without having control on his own will , because of an act done by the victim . This article is used to commutate penalty of crimes done by the name of honor .

Article 508 : the marriage between the felony committer and the victim : ( if a truly marriage was got between the criminal and the victim , then pursuit should be stopped . and even when he is sentenced to a penalty , it should be suspended ) .

This article, which stops prosecution and sentence application of the criminal in crimes of (rape , obscenity , seduction , kidnapping and immorality ) if he get married to his victim . this means he gets married in order to get rid of the penalty . at the same time the family of the victim wants to hidden the scandal . this increases the number of sexual assaults against women . Because the marriage ends the crime and stops the penalty . so in stead of punishing the criminal we award him by handing him the victim to be assaulted continuously , while she needs to be treated both psychologically and in health , to exit the terrible crises she was in . Regardless from the fact that the illegal marriage was done by force , and as it was just to cover the scandal , it doesn't contain the satisfaction which is the most important element in the marriage process .

Syria , deeply deplore and condemn the murder of Zahra Al Ezzo , and all crimes occurred We , in the Committees for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights in against women because of the so-called "honor". We call on the Syrian government, and very quickly, to stop such crimes against humanity, to work for :

to state it legally in the laws that women-killing crimes are considered crimes against innocent people , then the killer should be punished by the same penalties applied on any other citizen killer .

Amendment of all legal materials found in the Penal Code, which protect criminals, especially articles : 192-242-508-548.

Providing legal protection for women in the case of discrimination or physical and sexual violence in the workplace or at home, and seek to include the CEDAW in the Syrian personal statues laws .

necessity to reform the judiciary, and to reaffirm the authority of the law, the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, Because law is the only side which has the right of judgment on citizens, and the application of penalties against them , which contributes seriously to promote the concept of citizenship and that all citizens are equal under the law regardless of sex, race, religion and community.

5- Calling on all state , religious and civil institutions to consider women's issues as a priority in their work and activity.

6 – Calling on all the mass media to pay more attention to serious crimes like these . also to highlight , document and show them . And also to try to manufacture a civilized public opinion that face values and culture based upon such crimes.

7 - creating specialized centers of harboring and rehabilitation of the victims of the violence of women and girls in all Syrian governorates.

Let's work hand by hand in order to stop the crimes of "honor"

The Committees for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms

and Human Rights in Syria,

The Office of the Secretariat

2007<sup>th</sup> . Jan Damascus