

## **On the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, women civil society organizations in the Arab States Region join UN Secretary-General António Guterres's call for ceasefire and unity in the face of COVID-19**

We, the undersigned women's civil society organizations in the Arab States Region, join the call of UN Secretary-General António Guterres for an immediate global ceasefire, particularly in our part of the world. We call on all conflict parties and their supporters to heed his call and to ensure access to humanitarian and medical assistance to our affected communities, regardless of the interests of the conflict parties, so we can form a united front against the pandemic and have a respite from suffering during these holy days and beyond.

Our region has experienced endless conflicts and wars as well as decades of Israeli occupation. It has seen countless deaths and forced displacements for far too long. Year in, year out, these violations have exhausted our peoples and drained our resources. But the suffering of women and girls has been far worse as they have been subjected to increasing levels of discrimination, violence, including sexual violence, terrorism, trafficking and slavery, to name but a few. Human rights defenders have also been targeted.

Despite the alarming threats posed by COVID-19 and repeated calls to stop fighting and unite against the deadly pandemic, fighting continues in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, while the cumulative impact of Israeli occupation continues to cripple Palestine.

Much of our infrastructure has been destroyed, our health facilities have been continuously targeted, and our livelihoods have been severed as a tool of war. COVID-19 could not have come at a worse time. A large-scale outbreak of the pandemic in our countries would take our suffering to yet another level.

From the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, our organizations which had already been trying to alleviate the hardships of war on our communities, took on the additional challenge of helping stop the spread of the virus and assist affected communities. Equipped with digital technologies and the belief that we can fight this common enemy only together, we have worked with people in different parts of our countries to spread knowledge about preventive measures and help our inadequate health facilities to provide services.

Unless we stand united, COVID-19 will exacerbate ongoing conflicts and may even give rise to new ones, eroding what is left of our social fabrics. If we allow this virus to spread further in our war-torn countries, it would ravage us with no regard to our national, ethnic, religious, or political differences. It would hit us all, especially the most vulnerable among us, including children and the elderly. So, we need to put our differences aside and fight this common enemy before it is too late.

A ceasefire and the immediate implementation of the relevant international resolutions are the first and most essential moves in the battle against this invisible enemy in our region. This would not only give us a respite from the fighting and allow humanitarian aid and health services to reach the most vulnerable communities but would also open new channels for dialogue. Instead of spending more money on protracted wars, resources must be immediately

redirected to preventing the pandemic from spreading and helping those who suffered most from armed conflict.

Our drained countries do not need yet another call to fall on deaf ears. We have already missed many opportunities to usher in peace and unity. If heeded, our call would not only allow our communities to finally have rest from senseless fighting, but would also show us that we can still put our differences aside and silence our guns in the interest of our collective safety and security. The pandemic has only made the need for us, both men AND women, to finally sit at one table and make peace as urgent as ever.

## **Signatories**

1. Together Making Decisions (TMD)- Syria
2. Conference Star- Syria
3. Sawa Organization for Human Rights- Iraq
4. Barket Amal Organization- Syria
5. Libyan Women Peacebuilding Network- Libya
6. Yemeni Women Pact- Yemen
7. General Union of Palestinian Women- Palestine
8. Syrian Women Association- Syria
9. Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling- Palestine
10. Jusoor Center for Studies and Development- Libya
11. Center for Civil Society and Democracy CCSD- Syria
12. I am She Network- Syria
13. Altaqwa Association for Women and Child Rights- Iraq
14. Iraqi Al Firdaws Society- Iraq
15. Ameen Association for Relief and Development- Iraq
16. Lotus Culture Women League-Iraq
17. Sabaa Center for Studies and Human Development- Iraq
18. Minorities Women Forum in Iraq
19. Akkad Organization- Iraq
20. Al-Khair Humanitarian Organization- Iraq
21. Iraq Organization for Sustainable Tourism- Iraq
22. Al Monqith Organization for Human Rights- Iraq
23. Waeam Organization for Human Rights- Iraq
24. Or Organization for the Culture of Women and Children- Iraq
25. Bothoor ALkhaer organization for Relief and Development- Iraq
26. Taktuf Human Rights Organization- Iraq
27. Hawa Organization for Relief and Development- Iraq
28. Mina Organization for Humanitarian Relief and Development- Iraq
29. Light of Mercy for Human Rights Organization- Iraq
30. Hannah Youth Organization- Iraq
31. Skilled Iraqi Women Foundation- Iraq
32. Safa Development Association- Syria
33. Syriac Women Union- Syria
34. Ihsan Relief and Development- Syria
35. Global Communities- Syria Green Hands Project- Syria
36. Syrian Women Assembly-Syria
37. Survivors Assembly- Syria
38. Syrian Future Assembly- Syria
39. Hawa Association for Women Empowerment- Syria
40. Zanolbia For Syrian Women- Syria
41. Sawishka Association- Syria
42. Syrian League for Citizenship
43. Syrian Smile Maker Organization - Syria
44. Syrian Women's Network- Syria
45. Women Protection Network- Syria
46. Peace She-Leaders Network- Syria
47. Eshraqa Women's Centre- Syria
48. Centre for Research and Protection of Women's Rights- Syria
49. Elaf for Relief and Development- Syria
50. Women Empowerment Office in the Town of Hass- Syria
51. Syrian Women Forum- Syria
52. Syrian Women Platform- Syria
53. Children of One World Organization- Syria
54. Syrian Arab Red Crescent- Syria
55. You, Life and Peace Organization (YALP)- Syria

56. Violet Organization for Relief and Development- Syria
57. Tulip to Support Women and Children Organization- Syria
58. Al Manahel Centre- Syria
59. Syndicate of North Syria Doctors- Syria
60. Teachers Syndicate- Syria
61. Humanitarian Restoration Hope Organization- Syria
62. Nabd Libya Children- Youth Organization- Libya
63. I Am a Libyan Woman, But My Child is a Foreigner Organization- Libya
64. Iraqi Centre for Women and Child's Rights- Iraq
65. Syrian Civic Platform- Syria
66. Khawla Ben Azor Women's Association- Iraq
67. Association for the Care of Abandoned Families - Iraq
68. Association of Affected Women - Iraq
69. Iraqi Women Association - Iraq
70. Al-Rased Center for Human Rights - Iraq
71. Women's Rights Center for Relief and Development- Iraq
72. Woman Rights Center in Samawa- Iraq
73. Life Makers Centre (LMC)- Syria
74. Peace and Freedom Organization (PFO)
75. Organization el Mouda for Human Rights
76. Green Oasis Organization - Iraq
77. Ana Waset Organization to Support Women and Children- Iraq
78. Awan Organization for Awareness And Capability Development- Iraq
79. Ein Al Hayah for Women and Development Organization- Iraq
80. Malaz Development Association for Women and Children- Iraq
81. Farah Women Association- Iraq
82. Foundation Together A Better Life for Human and Social Development- Iraq
83. Women's Council of North East Syria- Syria
84. Children Diabetes Patients Care Association- Iraq
85. Ishraqat for Development Organization- Iraq
86. Bagdad Women Association (BWA)- Iraq
87. Demos Organization- Syria
88. Jazeera Human Rights Organization- Syria
89. Jasmine of Freedom Organization- Syria
90. Egyptian Feminist Union- Egypt
91. Alliance for Arab Women
92. Arab Women Network for Parity and Solidarity
93. Libyan Society for Human Rights and Scientific Research- Libya
94. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH)- Palestine
95. Media for Peace Organization- Yemen
96. AL-Namaa AL-Akhder for Developing Society and Environment- Iraq
97. Sisters' Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF)- Yemen
98. The Center of Strategic Studies to Support Women and Child- Yemen
99. Mozen for Sustainable Development- Libya
100. Albadia Organization for Charity and Human Development- Libya
101. Voice Organization for Charity- Libya
102. Peace School Organization- Yemen
103. SOS Center for Youth Capabilities Development- Yemen
104. Reliant Organization - Yemen
105. Democracy school- Yemen
106. People Foundation for Humanitarian Response- Yemen
107. Abwab Albar for Charity Organization- Libya
108. Women Legal Organization- Yemen
109. Nour Al-Ghad Humanitarian Cultural Organization- Iraq
110. Libyan Women Forum- Libya
111. Cohesion Organization for Development and Peace in Sebha- Libya
112. Culture & Free Thought Association- Palestine
113. Jil Alkraan Organization- Syria
114. Step by Step For Human Rights And Law- Libya
115. Libyan Network to Support and Empower Women-Libya