

(C.I.F.D)



Centre ISIS Pour Femmes et Développement

Isis Center for Women and development (www.isiscenter.vom) is organizing the Seventh Mediterranean Women International conference on the theme «The escalation of gender-based violence against women and girls in the Mena region» on May 29, 30 and 31 , 2015 at the Palais des Congrès, Fez, Morocco. The languages of the Forum are: Arabic, French and English

Description

While the post-Arab Spring turmoil is affecting men, women, and children, specific types of violence systematically target women and girls. The post-Arab Spring initial backlash on women's rights is not only gathering momentum everyday, but it is developing into unprecedented new types of violence against women with the dangerously mounting tide of Jihadism. The new forms of violence range from the imposition of the *niqab* (total veiling), the ban of women from public unless they are accompanied by a male member of the family, a return of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) for women between the ages of 11 and 46, stoning to death of (supposedly) adulterous women, assassination of female activists, *Jihad al-Nikah* (brainwashed women offering sex in support of the Jihadists), and enslavement (buying/selling of women and girls). These new forms of violence are indirectly "sanctioning" the already familiar types such as moralization incriminating women for any social crisis, domestic battering, increased sexual harassment, forced marriage, and (gang) rape that accompanied the post-uprising phases in the region. The ambiguous barriers between moderate and extremist Islamists is intensifying the daily misery of women in most parts of the region and threatening the hard-won women's rights, and systematic brainwashing is involving more and more women in the recruitment of female Jihadists. In parallel, extreme violence against women is heavily used in the Jihadists propaganda narratives and glorified by mainstream media. The dire absence of statistics, let alone serious academic research, on this issue is adding fuel to an already hot problem whose short- and long- term social, economic, and political repercussions are far-reaching and call for a combination of reliable research and urgent policies.

The seventh edition of the Mediterranean Women Forum has a central and a more overarching aims. Its central aim is to document and unveil the new types of violence that women are subject to, link them to the familiar types, understand their social, economic and political ramifications, dig out their surface and deeper underpinnings especially in relation to Jihadism, propose strategies to stop them, and seek short- and long- term policies that would implement these strategies. The overarching aim of the conference is to highlight the relevance of the topic for the sensitive and boarder issues such women's economic and political empowerment, the reform of education, the reform of the religious field, the enhancement of an inclusive democracy in the region, the separation of religion from politics, the role of the media, and the heterogeneous nature of political Islam. As Islam is at the same an integral part of men's and women's everyday life and a ruling tool at all levels, the conference seeks to integrate it as part of the solution not the problem.

The conference will consist of the following axes:

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- 1.Types of violence Against women
- 2.The Media as a glorifier of Violence
- 3.Strategies to combat this violence
 - .Education Reform
 - .Textbook Reform
- 4.Transnational Networking
5. Masculinities