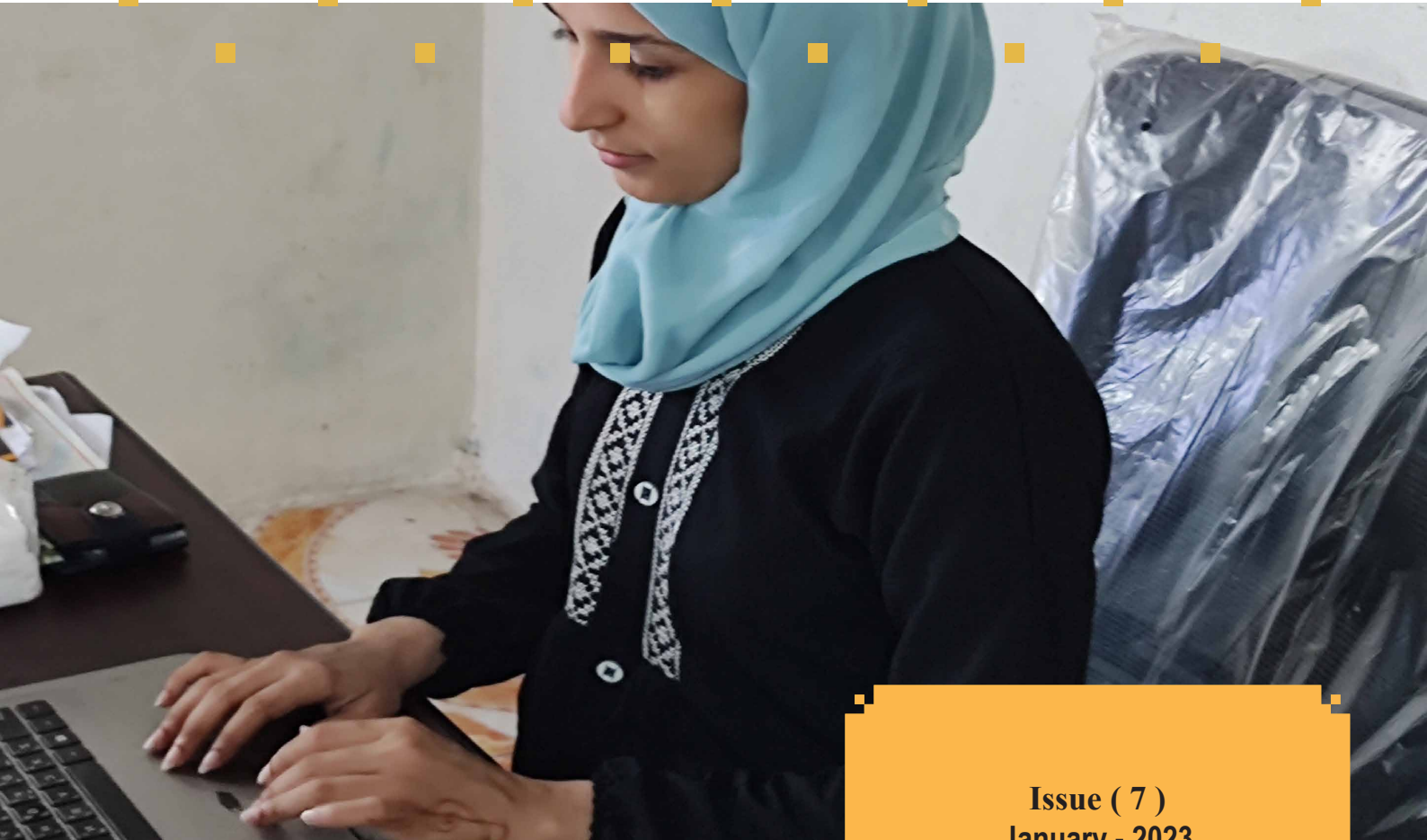


# Women in Development and Peace



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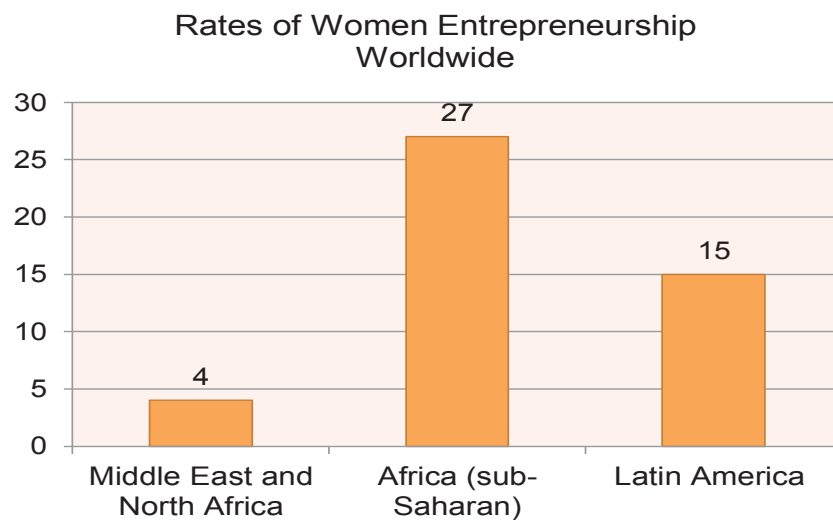
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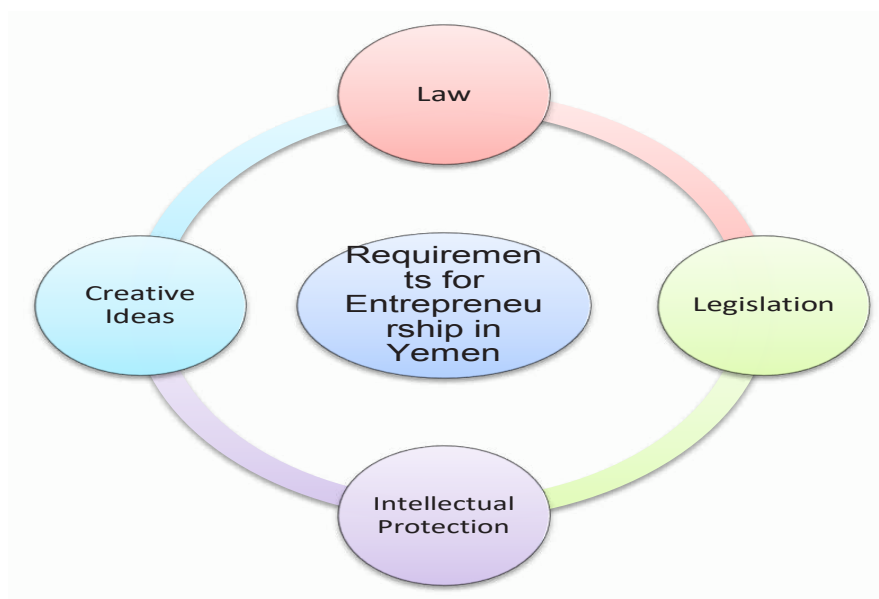
### • Reality and Ambition of Women in Entrepreneurship

“Entrepreneurship” is defined as the process of creating something new of value or finding value added to a service, product, production method, or marketing in a distinct way. Women's entrepreneurship is an important yet untapped source of economic growth in most parts of the world. Women in the Middle East and North Africa region recorded the lowest rates of entrepreneurial activity, amounting to only 4% of the population. However, the highest rates were recorded in Africa (sub-Saharan) at 27%, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean at 15%.



Entrepreneurship in Yemen needs the legal and legislative regulating environment. Creating such environment will play a big role in encouraging entrepreneurs. This environment revolves around creating a law that encourages and regulates the work of entrepreneurship and protects intellectual rights.

Pioneering projects are based on ideas creativity. They aim at obtaining a possible opportunity, and working on the success of projects with full enthusiasm and desire, using the latest means, and bearing many risks in order to achieve the project's objectives.



Small and medium enterprises represent more than 90% of all enterprises worldwide. These projects provide more than two-thirds of the jobs. They also account for the majority of new job creation. However, they still face many challenges that weaken their ability to grow and succeed, especially in third world countries, including Yemen<sup>1</sup>.

Recently, interest in women entrepreneurship has increased in the Middle East and North Africa region. This helped to conduct several studies which aimed at trying to understand the significant decline in women's participation in the labor force and political life in the Middle East and North Africa region at the regional and national levels, and to identify the challenges facing women entrepreneurs<sup>2</sup>. According to UN statistics, women in the Arab region face many obstacles to join the labor market. They are at a higher risk of unemployment than men.

### • **Low political stability constitutes an obstacle for women entrepreneurs:**

In the same context, Dr. Dina Belal, Manager of Technopole incubator, Faculty of Engineering, University of Khartoum, indicated that the incubator was established in 2016 and funded by the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah, with the aim of developing the Faculty of Engineering, supporting the technological ideas of graduates, and transforming their graduation projects into products through which they can enter the labor market and compete. She added, "we have more than 15 success stories within the incubator, not only with regard to graduates, but also to students of different levels who started their projects and are now in different stages to present their projects to the labor market." She pointed out that 40% of the entrepreneurs in the incubator are women, and confirmed that the work is good in the field of women and youth empowerment in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

At the same time, she noted the challenges facing female entrepreneurs in Sudan. "There are many challenges that impede their entry into the labor market in Sudan, the most important of which is the political and economic instability in the country," she said. "This has greatly affected the performance of male and female entrepreneurs in Sudan. However, we were able to overcome these challenges, especially after COVID-19 pandemic, and we helped entrepreneurs make network with different sectors."

1- Ahmed Jobran, Entrepreneurship Environment in Yemen, Khuyut Website, June, 2021.

2- Nagham Hussein Ne'amah, Ways of Enhancing Arab Women's Role in Entrepreneurship, 2020. <https://portal.arid.my/ar-LY>

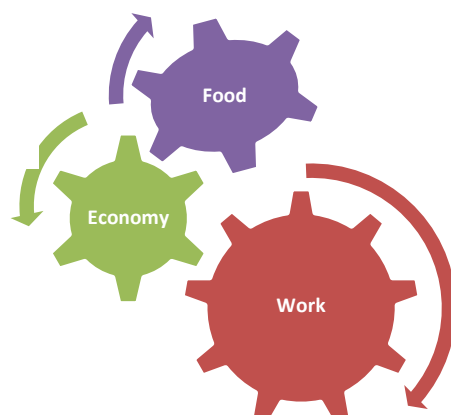
- **The need for legislation to address the poor participation of women in innovation:**

Ms. Reem Badran, a former member of the Jordanian Parliament, described the Global Forum for Entrepreneurs and Investment as important, because it focuses on bridging the digital divide. She indicated that the participation of Jordanian women entrepreneurs aims at communicating with entrepreneurs from all over the world, informing the concerned authorities in the region about the challenges they face, especially with regard to networking and differences in digital economies. It also aims at financing instruments available in the Arab region and whether they are really good and effective, or do they need to be modified in order to have an impact on women's involvement in the labor market? She added, "the forum focused on policies that will have a direct impact on bridging the digital divide, not only between East and West, but also within countries, some of which suffer from gaps between capitals and the outskirts, as well as gaps between women and men."



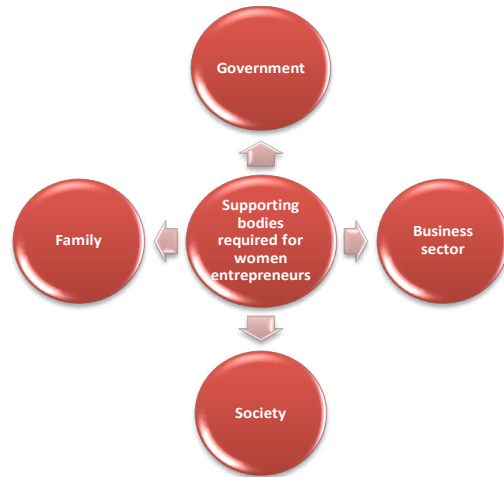
Badran added that the unemployment rate is very high among Arab women, and their presence on boards of directors in private sector companies is very low. She also pointed out that the gap between men and women is large in our region". How can we bridge this gap?" She also indicated that enacting new legislation to support innovation is not only the responsibility of the government but also legislators in parliaments, civil society, and private innovation companies<sup>3</sup>.

Supporting women in the field of entrepreneurship will not only directly benefit women and their families, but will also contribute to the country's overall economic growth. According to international reports, although women do two-thirds of the work in the world, they receive only 10% of the global income. They also produce nearly half of the world's food. Yet, they own only 1% of agricultural land. This is due to the social and economic segregation that negatively affects women's active role in public life, not only at the regional level but worldwide, despite their proven competence in various fields.



3- Arab Women Empowerment in Entrepreneurship and Technology, 2022, <https://news.un.org>

Supporting women entrepreneurship requires an integrated and collaborative attention of government, business sector, society, the family, and the entrepreneur herself. All of this begin by addressing social, cultural, legal, and political obstacles and constraints, enabling the pioneer to overcome the accumulations of societal misconceptions that requires swift measures and solutions to address them and eliminate their root causes, such as barter marriage, marriage to a rich man, early marriage, neglecting women's views in most of these cases<sup>4</sup>.



Some Arab women from different countries have begun to tread leadership path like others through a number of successful projects that encourage Arab women to be creative and show their true undistorted image<sup>5</sup>.

Nadine Abu Zaki, CEO of the Arab Women's Forum, stated, "figures indicate that women have made remarkable progress in entrepreneurship, and that one out of four companies is headed by women. It was also noted that women who engage in business establish large companies, not medium or small ones.

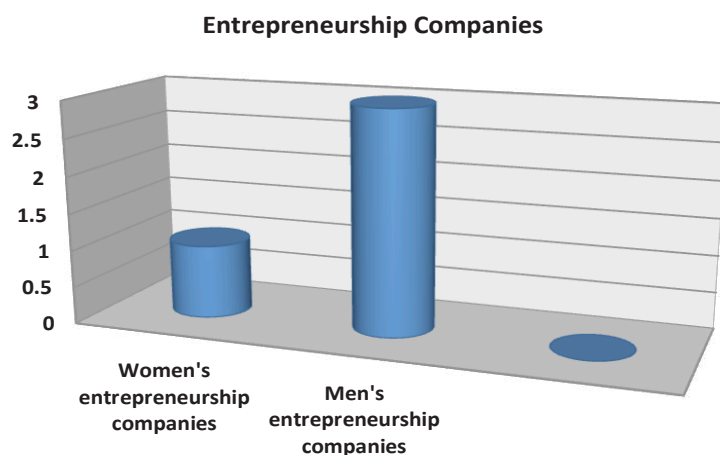
Abu Zaki asserted, "Arab governments today have a degree of awareness in this regard, and many associations and institutions are taking initiatives to support pioneering women and highlight their success to the public through seminars and conferences<sup>6</sup>."



4- Ghada Amer, Women, Entrepreneurship, and Local Economy, Molhem, 2022, <https://molhem.com>

5- Entrepreneurship is a new gateway for Arab women towards economic effectiveness, WISE Summit, 2022, <https://www.wise-qatar.org>

6- Women and Entrepreneurship, Al-Akhbar, Lebanon, 2022, <https://al-akhbar.com>



- **Challenges facing entrepreneurship in Yemen:**

There are many challenges and obstacles to entrepreneurship in Yemen, the most important of which are:

- 1- Limited invested capital, high costs, and difficulty in obtaining soft loans or support for establishing and financing projects. Obtaining financing for the entrepreneurial idea in Yemen faces many difficulties, because of the lack of companies allocating capital to support entrepreneurial projects.
- 2- Relying on family experiences in starting and managing entrepreneurial projects. In many projects in Yemen, there is a great reliance on the part of administrators on family experiences in management and appointment, which constitutes a barrier to entrepreneurship in Yemen.
- 3- Employing untrained or insufficiently trained manpower in order to reduce costs, and this causes a delay in entrepreneurship in Yemen.
- 4- Lack of clear economic plans, which makes realizing the future vision of projects blurry and vague. In order to promote entrepreneurship in Yemen, comprehensive economic plans must be provided for all industrial, commercial, and technical sectors among others.
- 5- Weakness or lack of the legal and legislative environment regulating the work of small businesses.
- 6- Low marketing experience and poor skills of workers, which are among the most major obstacles to entrepreneurship in Yemen.
- 7- No tax concessions to support small businesses.
- 8- Poor interest in transferring the experiences of developed countries which developed strategies for small businesses<sup>7</sup>.

7- Abdulfattah Al-Humidi, Entrepreneurship in Yemen, October, 2020, <https://www.businessesyemen.com>



**• A realistic embodiment of support for peace in Yemen:**

Numerous humanitarian and UN reports indicated that Yemeni women have played important and positive roles as peacemakers in their regions. A woman elected to a community committee in Taiz has assumed responsibility for mediating disputes related to women's access to resources and inheritance. She could communicate more easily with disputing women than her male colleagues.

A woman who was elected to a community committee in Taiz took on the responsibility of mediating disputes related to women's access to resources and inheritance. She could communicate more easily with female disputants than her male counterparts.

In the same vein, another female mediator in one of the western governorates of Yemen indicated that local committees have been formed to resolve disputes in the absence of effective authorities since 2015. Through her position in one of these councils, she was able to contribute to the opening of a border crossing located on the front line.

Yemeni women also played key roles in preventing conflicts between the government and tribes and averting conflict between powerful tribes. For example, when a dispute broke out between members of two different tribes in the Hajjah governorate over the ownership of a land, dispute escalated into a full-fledged armed battle between the two tribes, killing more than 60 people. One of the women mediators managed to convince tribal leaders to gather a group of men to camp out on the contested land until they reached a solution.

In Marib governorate, east of Sana'a, many stories emerged of women publicly defying armed men to stop fighting and fulfil their protective responsibilities. In one case, a group of trained women mediators negotiated a ceasefire between two tribes by "staying under the sun refusing hospitality invitations from the tribal leaders until their call for a ceasefire was accepted."

Similarly, women in Arhab district in Sana'a took advantage of protective tribal customs to prevent burning valuable construction equipment and tractors belonging to some anti-authority parties. They climbed onto the equipment and said that the equipment provided income for their families and therefore could not be destroyed, a demand that was respected.<sup>8</sup>

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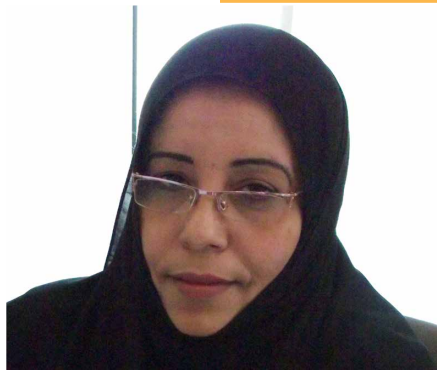
8- UN Women, Yemen, October 2022, <https://arabstates.unwomen.org>

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- 3- United Nations, Arab Women Empowerment in Entrepreneurship and Technology, 2022, <https://news.un.org>
- 4- Ghada Amer, Women and Entrepreneurship, and Local Economy, Molhem, 2022, <https://molhem.com>.
- 5- Entrepreneurship is a new gateway for Arab women towards economic effectiveness, WISE Summit, 2022, <https://www.wise-qatar.org>
- 6- Women and Entrepreneurship, Al-Akhbar, Lebanon, 2022, <https://al-akhbar.com>
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- 8- UN Women, Yemen, <https://arabstates.unwomen.org>, October 2022.

## Yemeni Women Delighted with Women Status Enhancing Decisions

A group of Yemeni women expressed their pride in appointing the first female judge to the Supreme Judicial Council in the country, calling for support for more procedures and measures to narrow the gender gap. According to the worldwide gender gap index for the year 2020, a third of Yemeni women are educated. They make up less than 2% of the political process and no more than 6% of the labor force, which is the lowest percentage in the entire world. The Yemeni women expressed their relief after the President of the PLC of Aden government decided to appoint Sabah Al-Alwani, a judge, in a high judicial position in the country, where men have been in positions of decision-making for a long time.



In the same context, Al-Alwani stated to "The National" newspaper that her appointment is a first step towards empowering Yemeni women. "I am pleased with the decision, since this is the first time that a woman has been represented in such a high position throughout the country's history," she added.

It is noted that Yemen occupied the last rank in the gender gap index for 13 consecutive years provided by the World Economic Forum. However, despite the ongoing war, in which the United Nations estimates that more than 230,000 people have been killed since 2014, Yemeni women have made remarkable achievements in narrowing this gap<sup>1</sup>.

## A Training Program to Qualify Young Yemeni Women in Entrepreneurship

In light of the exceptional circumstances and the ongoing conflict in Yemen, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in collaboration with the Agency for the Development of Small Enterprises, implemented a training program in a number of districts of Hadhramout Governorate. The program sought to provide its participants with theoretical and practical knowledge related to the businesses and trades of their choice.

Aisha Bawazeer, one of the trainees in the field of food processing, said, "The vocational training represented my starting point in the field of entrepreneurship, because I gained the knowledge and skills necessary to manage the project and maintain its sustainability. I can now start my own yogurt and pickle project, because the grant provided me with the necessary tools for my business." Aisha

1- 2022 <https://yemenfuture.net>

hopes her business will keep expanding so that she can support her family. On the other hand, she wants to use the profits to pay for her children's education expenses and provide them with a better life.

Seham Mahrous, a textile apprentice, noted, "I am highly interested in weaving. I want to start my own project of making Mao-uz<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, this training is my first step towards achieving my dream, because it has provided me with the necessary business management skills that I need. Furthermore, this project will improve our quality of life."

### **Yemeni Women Actively Participate in the "Communication of Generations" Forum to Support Arab Action.**

The National Committee for Women participated in the "Communication of Generations" forum to support joint Arab action, which was organized by Algeria. The forum sought to promote joint Arab action by presenting all Arab societies and their contributions on ways to address the most prominent current challenges, especially women and youth issues.

The forum, according to Dr. Shafiq Saeed, the Head of the Women National Committee, will discuss issues of priority and importance at the Arab level. This will occur in order to crystallize a vision to support joint Arab action in light of developments in international relations, including energy, food, health, security, and climate change, in addition to the multiple challenges of dimensions in the global system. She also stressed on the importance of activating the sustainable development goals for the benefit of women and youth regarding some issues including, health, education, poverty reduction, and political as well as economic empowerment.

She also stressed on the importance of encouraging participatory democracy, promoting national values between government agencies and civil society organizations, discussing topical issues within a participatory approach, and consolidating the foundations of Arab solidarity, in addition to enhancing communication between generations<sup>3</sup>.

Dr. Saeed reviewed the statement of Ayoub Al-Labisi, the Acting Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Yemen, on the many challenges that Yemeni women face, including displacement, economic challenges, and gender-based violence, on the Internet. She explained that the women's needs today are represented in protection, legal support, psychological rehabilitation, and economic as well as political empowerment.



2- A traditional Yemeni costume worn by men instead of pants.

3- <https://alsharaeanews.com>

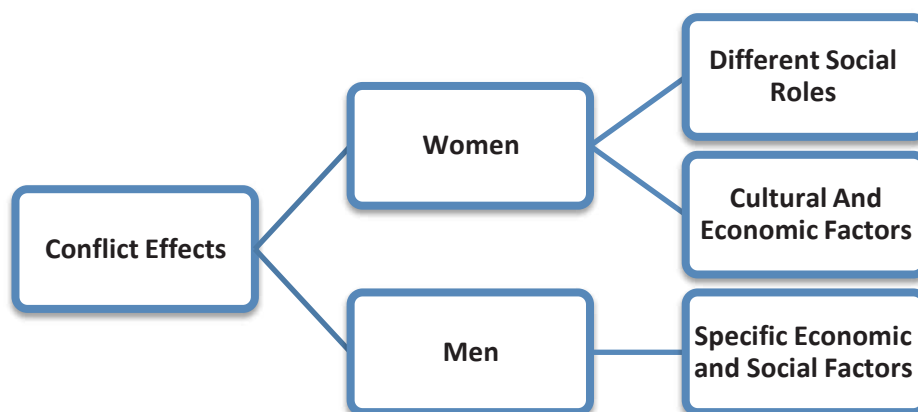
### • Yemeni Women's Support for Peace

Throughout history, women have been able to leave their political impact on the process of their country's transition to peace, and to play an active role in restoring peace and security to their homeland, especially after the destruction of almost all aspects of life and the torn of the social fabric apart by armed conflict. Although peace process's decisions and agreements have a direct impact on the lives of women and girls, it was noted that 92 of the 585 peace treaties signed between 1990 and 2010 made reference to women. Involving women in the peace process and making their voices heard achieves the following:

First: It leads to a lasting and comprehensive peace. Women can present many issues related to the needs of various sectors of the population, so the peace agreement should be discussed and included for everyone, not just women.

Second: Accepting participation in peace building is a key indicator of accepting true democracy and realistic partnership with all segments of society.

Therefore, women's representation in building and promoting peace in Yemen is critical at all levels, in addition to addressing women's issues in the current Yemeni peace agreement. This is due to the fact that the effects of conflict and war differ from men to women due to different social roles and cultural and economic factors that led to inequality. In wars, women's suffering exacerbates, making it difficult to demand change and recognize and implement women's rights. When referring to the issue of women's participation in the political and peace building processes, many decision-makers in Yemen may be heard repeating the phrase, in an exaggerated local dialect, "Now is not the time for women. We are in a state of war." Moreover, during the conflict, the representatives of the former UN envoy to Yemen, Jamal bin Omar and Ismail Waldalshaikh, repeated in more than one meeting that the parties to the conflict all agree on issues of women's participation.



Governments must recognize women's capabilities and skills in life and enhance this opportunity to implement effective initiatives in the field of peace building and stability. It is also necessary to work to increase women's participation in natural resource management sectors. This is a way of achieving economic, social, and political progress, despite the media's poor presentation of women as active members. It is critical to shed light on the positive transformation of gender roles and to break down

the barriers that impede equality and justice between them<sup>1</sup>. This would encourage women and governments to continuously integrate the conscious view of women and their knowledge in building a peaceful future for their societies. As a result, they must be given more authority in order to save what is left of the environment while also being merciful to human<sup>2</sup>.

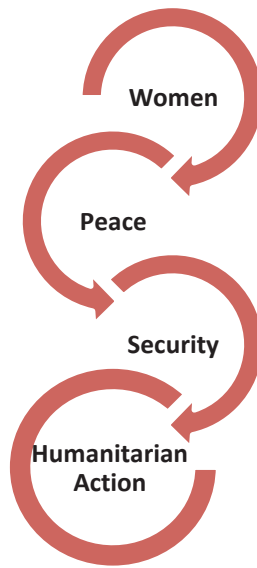
The convergence and coherence of work aspects relating to women's issues, peace and security on the one hand, and efforts of social justice between the sexes in humanitarian work on the other, are based on feminist transformation and inclusion principles of the international humanitarian and human rights law. The principles of women, peace, security and equality in humanitarian action stipulate that in order to translate words into action on the ground, all efforts to achieve sustainable peace must aim at elevating the voices, experiences and rights of women of all origins and regions. Besides, the voices of marginalized and less-represented groups must be ensured and guided in the decision-making process. Furthermore, a clear path that takes into account gender differences in decisions related to financing, politics, and programming must be followed.



The Charter for Women in Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action represents a clear path for Member States, United Nations bodies, organizations and actors from the private sector and civil society – including women-led organizations, NGOs and academic institutions. This should be done to take concerted action on women, peace and security as well as humanitarian action. The Charter unanimously agrees that by taking consistent, single-track measures, results that bring about significant positive transformations can be achieved.

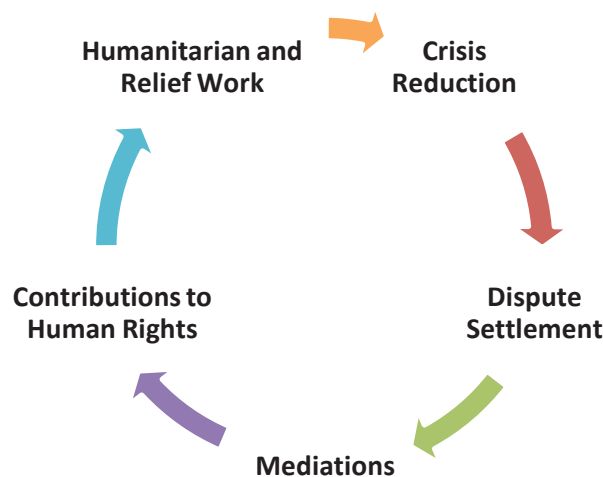
1- United Nations Development Program, 2016

2- Diana Ghosn, We are one step away from achieving peace: Women as builders of peace from an environmental perspective, Salam Wa Kalamwebsite, June, 2022.



Women in different regions, including those who support peace at the local level, are still noticeably excluded from formal and informal peace processes and efforts aimed at achieving sustainable peace. This occurs despite their continued contributions to crisis reduction, conflict resolution and mediation in peace processes, in addition to their existing commitments in the field of human rights. Despite the evidence that peace processes ensure women's participation, it is likely that the peace process will be successful and lead to better and more sustainable agreements<sup>3</sup>.

*A figure showing an aspect of women's contributions to peace processes*



Dozens of women leaders from the Kurdistan region and ten Arab countries gathered in Beirut in response to an invitation from Al-Quds Center for Political Studies and the Danish Centre for Research and Information on Gender, Equality and Diver-

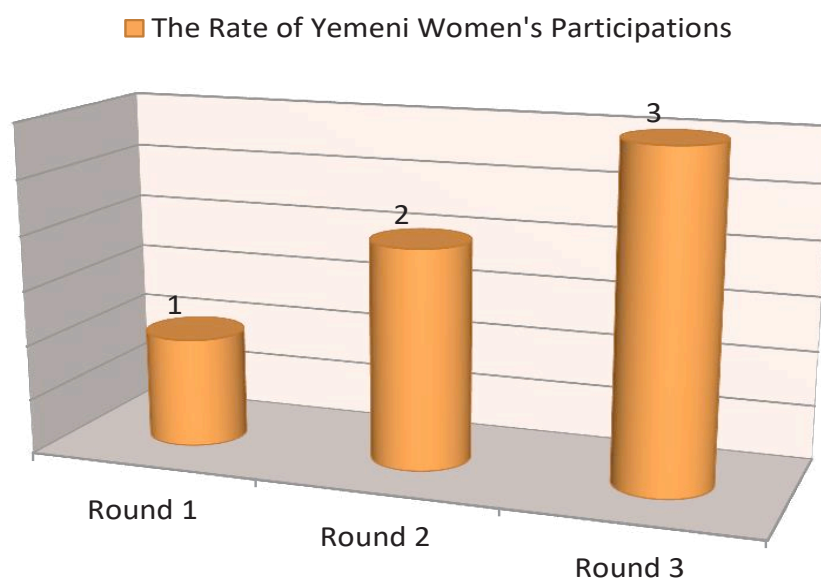
3- Women, Peace & Security and Humanitarian Action, <https://wpshacompact.org>

sity (KVINFORM). The meeting aimed to discuss "strengthening the role of women in peace building and resolving conflicts in the Arab region," in addition to reviewing national plans aimed at implementing UN Security Council Resolution No. 1325.

It is noted that women's official participation in peace negotiations is still weak and needs support from the concerned international bodies, most notably the United Nations and its envoys to Yemen, the parties to the conflict, countries and international organizations. It must also implement international commitments to mainstream gender at all levels, including the political level, through a clear and timely plan of action, as well as allocate part of the financial resources to support the peace building process in order to enhance the participation of women at the local levels.

### • Women Participation in Settlement and Peace Establishment:

In the Geneva 1 negotiations, June 16, 2015, One Yemeni woman participated as a representative of a prominent political party in the "National Delegation". Because of the lobby attempts from consensus and in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations Envoy and the staff of the United Nations Office for Women, the number of women participating in Geneva 2 increased to the participation of two Yemeni women. One of whom represented the "Legitimacy Delegation" and the other the "National Delegation". With continued lobby in this aspect, the number of participants in the Kuwait negotiations, which was held on April 21, 2016, rose to three Yemeni women. In the division of teams, which took place during the negotiations, the participants included Nehal Al-Awlaki in the political team, while Faeqa Al-Sayed and Mervat Magali were in the prisoners' team. Thus, the participation of Yemeni women in the peace negotiations and the attempt to end the war and conflict inside Yemen can be clarified as follows:





- **Compound Marginalization:**

Over six sessions, the participants discussed several related topics, including "enhancing the role of women in building peace in countries of armed conflict". They listened to presentations by Iraqi, Syrian, Yemeni and Libyan women leaders. The other topics included "the role of women in combating extremism and making public policies" as in the Jordanian and Egyptian cases, also the topic of "the role of women in building national consensus and transitional justice" as in the Tunisian and Moroccan experiences, and the topic of "the compound marginalization...women of religious and national minorities". Whereas the participants touched on what they called the "compound marginalization" suffered by women of various religious, national and ethnic components in a number of countries in the region. In particular, the regions those were the scene of the most egregious violations that these components were subjected to at the hands of terrorist violent extremism groups, specifically in Syria and Iraq. A brief review of the conditions of women from these components in many other countries was conducted.

The participants' discussions were characterized by the depth and enthusiasm. The working papers and interventions dealt with a presentation of the most important challenges facing women in countries of armed conflict and countries suffering from sectarianism divisions and intellectual conflicts. The speakers also presented their initiatives and experiences in mediation endeavors, national dialogue, conflict resolution, and humanitarian relief for refugees and displaced persons specifically for women and children. Additionally, building national consensus, combating extremism and fanaticism, as well as confronting manifestations of tyranny and authoritarianism in their societies especially those based on gender. They also presented recommendations and initiatives that would "enhance the role of women in building peace and resolving conflicts in the region" in the next stage.



In presenting their identification of the most important obstacles and challenges facing women in the countries of the region, the participants noted the varying conditions that characterize the countries and societies of the region. Accordingly, the effects of each of them differed from one country to another, but most of the inter-

ventions and working papers stopped, to one degree or another, on four of the most prominent challenges facing women at this stage, namely:

- 1- The old-new challenge, based on the patriarchal structure of Arab societies and the cultural heritage that still casts a shadow over women and reflects clear discrimination against them in many areas and fields, including the constitutional and legislative framework, as well as policies and procedures that are not responsive to gender.
- 2- The challenge left by the weakness of the state and the sagging of its institutions in many countries of armed conflicts and civil wars. This allowed the emergence of forces outside the scope of the state that practice coercion by many means, including armed violence. It also seek to impose their "own logic" on everyone. This is often done under the guise of religious, sectarian, regional and clan, with which women become the first victims of the absence of the state, institutions and the rule of law.
- 3- The next challenge is due to the spread of problems of extremism and violence in many countries and societies in the region. Moreover, the growing influence of extremist ideology that promotes a culture that robs women of their dignity, humanity and citizenship and turns women into captives in the age of slave-girls and slave-markets.
- 4- The challenge caused by the return of manifestations of tyranny in many Arab countries and societies. Where freedoms recede, rights fade and a setback occurs in the course of political reform and democratic transition in many countries of the region, and the resulting exposure of female activists in public national action to the worst types of persecution based on gender<sup>4</sup>.

The participants reached a broad consensus on the set of tasks that they must carry out in the next stage. After extensive discussion, they developed what could be called the features of a "road map", to mobilize the role of women in the various aforementioned fields. Among the most important recommendations reached by the participants are the following:

- **General Recommendations:**

- 1- The participants agreed that the civil-democratic state, the state of citizenship and the rule of law, the just state that guarantees the rights of all its male and female citizens without discrimination of any kind, is the one that includes the general constitutional, legal and institutional framework that guarantees the rights of women and guarantees their participation and representation.
- 2- The participants stressed the necessity of what is called the "constitutionalization of women's citizenship" in their countries without discrimination. In addition to the reform of the legislative system that robs women of their rights, given that the constitution and the law are the main pillars of women's struggle for their freedom, dignity and citizenship.
- 3- The participants agreed to stress the need to support women's participation in various fields on the basis of equality and to adopt the principle of "quota" as a transitional measure. This is to enhance the participation of women in political

4- Conference on How to Enhance the Role of Women in Peace-building and Conflict Resolution, Danish-Arab Partnership Program, Jerusalem Center for Studies, [www.dapp.dk/ar/reportage](http://www.dapp.dk/ar/reportage)

parties, parliaments, local government councils, the executive authority, national dialogue committees, mediation, negotiations, and transitional justice committees and in various civil society institutions to represent a partner and equal in establishing peace and building national consensus.

- 4- Enhancing the economic status of women through integration programs in the labor market and the business sector. Also giving special attention to women's work in the countryside, the desert and in marginalized and poor areas in major cities.
- 5- Considering educational development as a necessary and non-deferrable matter in all countries of the region. This is to build generations have critical thinking and an independent personality that is open to the cultures, arts and sciences of the peoples of the civilized and enlightened world, as well as to integrate the human rights system into educational curricula.
- 6- The participants called for the formation of broad national, regional and international coalitions to achieve the objectives of International Resolution 1325 and its implementation national plans.

#### • **Women Peacemakers in Yemen and the Challenges they Face:**

Since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, Yemeni women have played a pivotal role as negotiators and mediators, whether it is in the release of victims of enforced disappearance, in safe humanitarian corridors, or in refusing to recruit children. These women who have been involved in providing dialogues in conflict areas are challenging those who abuse power. This makes them vulnerable to various forms of security threats.



Although there are pioneering initiatives, the current reality in Yemen shows that women peace-makers, humanitarian workers and political activists are subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, sexual assault and rape. They are often imprisoned with their children, which add another trauma to both the mother and her children.

Torture and sexual assault have become tools of war against women and girls. Violations and assaults on women's rights have reached a level of danger and threat that Yemen has not witnessed before. In this difficult environment, women peacemakers do not have protection mechanisms in place to help them recover or support them to continue their work.<sup>5</sup>

5- Nesma Mansour, et al., Building Peace Without Protection: Obstacles for Yemeni Women to Build Peace, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk>

Women peacemakers struggle to maintain their credibility and reputation. They usually fall victim to defamation campaigns that can reach the point where they are accused of being part of prostitution networks especially those who are arrested and detained because of their work. Professor Sonia's case confirms this fact. She had an organization supporting war orphans, who used her platform to denounce violence and economic decline.

However, the problems that women peacemakers face in southern areas vary. They face similar serious obstacles. They suffer from threats and accusations of terrorism, immorality, secularism and atheism.

Afra Al-Hariri, a female human rights defender and a member of the technical advisory group of the office of the United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen, received death threats and hate speech. She was also targeted by defamation campaigns on social media. These threats intensified when suspicious people went to ask about her in the neighborhood where she lives to determine her place of residence. Afra filed an official complaint with the authorities in Aden at the time, but the authorities did not follow any procedures to investigate these threats.

Moreover, organizations operating in Yemen also testify that the number of cases of violence against women peacemakers and female human rights defenders is growing. The available capacities to assist them are scarce and not keeping pace with this increase.

Protection programs are known to be the most underfunded, highlighting the most urgent need for sustainable, resilient and long-term funding that would allow women living in conflict areas and subjected to abuse because of their peace work to feel safe. Most importantly, they are not left alone, and allowed to continue helping their communities. In particular, there is a need to support the resettlement of these women to safe countries, with priority given to Yemeni refugee women.

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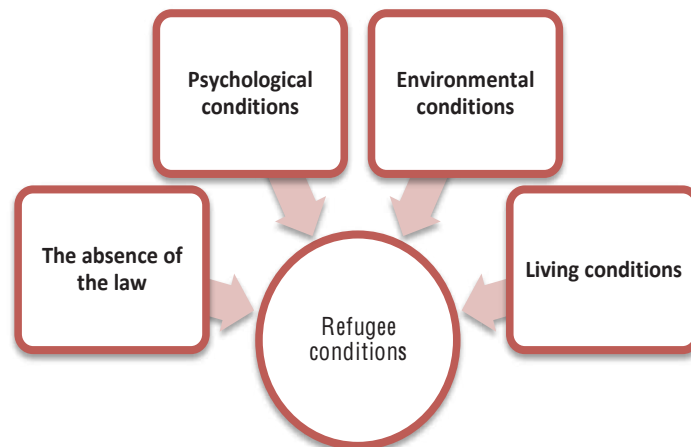
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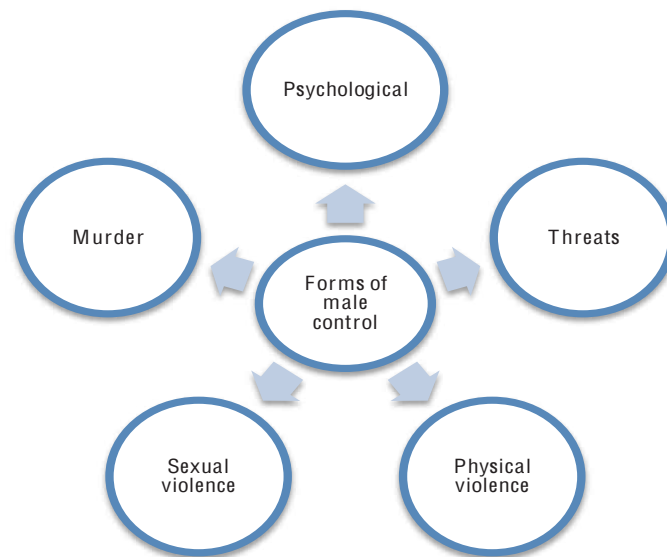
## Violence Against Women as an Impediment to Peace

One of the major impediments to women's peace and security is violence against women. Security politics is conceptualized on identifying the threats from "outside" national borders while these threats come for women most often "within" the relations of their affiliations. However, the security policy often fails to reach there as the security of women has been moved to the "private" sphere, to be taken care of the nearest: family male members and husbands, who are most often the abuser. EU has adopted European Security and Defense Policy but there is still a considerable resistance to develop a common European strategy to curb violence against women.

The majority of field studies and UN reports confirmed the prevalence of gender-based violence in all its forms among the displaced and refugee communities, including sexual and domestic violence. This may be due to the psychological, environmental, and living conditions of the displaced and refugees, as well as the absence of law pertaining to the displaced or refugees who do not obtain legal immigration status in Yemen. Although victims refrained from speaking or reporting cases of sexual violence, UN reports confirmed the existence of rape cases and the need for effective psychological, legal, and clinical services to address these cases. The Yemeni Women's Union database indicated that there were 23 rape cases, 7 of which were in Abyan governorate and 6 of which were in Hodeidah governorate.



Some researchers and social workers say that women are often subjected to violence because of the universal patriarchal gender power order in all the societies, which privileges men over women. In order to maintain this privileged position, some men may exercise various forms of control, such as threats, psychological, physical and sexual violence, and even murder. The subordinated position of women in peace makes them even more exposed when a military conflict erupts. Independently of the different nature of conflicts and occupations, there is universality in all of them: the marginalization and control over women increases and this control becomes synonymous with the control of the whole community.



Constant male dominance over women stands on the way of gender equality and social development and contributes significantly to maintaining patriarchal control in society. Militarism also asserts hard masculinity that favors violence to protect peace and a weak femininity in need for protection. However, to be protected means in advance to be subordinate, which excludes the possibility for real participation of women. It is how women's absence from decision-making within the international security is sustained.

EuroMed Feminist Initiative works to expose the structures of violence against women in peace and war and to reinforce feminist analyses and a feminist vision of global justice where transnational alliances against militarism and the military are fundamental building blocks, in order to put human security that includes violence against women on the top of the political agendas<sup>1</sup>.

### History of Violence against Women

Violence against Women has a very long history. It is considered one of the most widespread and persistent human rights violations. Although the incidents and intensity of such violence have varied over time and even today vary between societies, such violence is often seen as a mechanism for the subjugation of women, whether in society in general or in an interpersonal relationship. Such violence may arise from a sense of entitlement, superiority, misogyny or similar attitudes in the perpetrator or his violent nature, especially against women<sup>2</sup>.

According to UN Women, "37% of Arab women have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. There are indicators that the percentage might be higher. In some countries, the rate of violence against women is as high as 70%." Violations and abuses of women's rights have reached a historic level of gravity that some countries did not witness before. Amid this vicious environment, women peacebuilders have no protection mechanisms available to help support them heal or continue their work<sup>3</sup>.

1- <https://www.efi-ife.org> .

2- <https://ar.wikipedia.org>.

3- Nesma Mansour, et al., Building Peace Without Protection: Obstacles for Yemeni Women to Build Peace, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk>

**Worrying Cases and Models:**

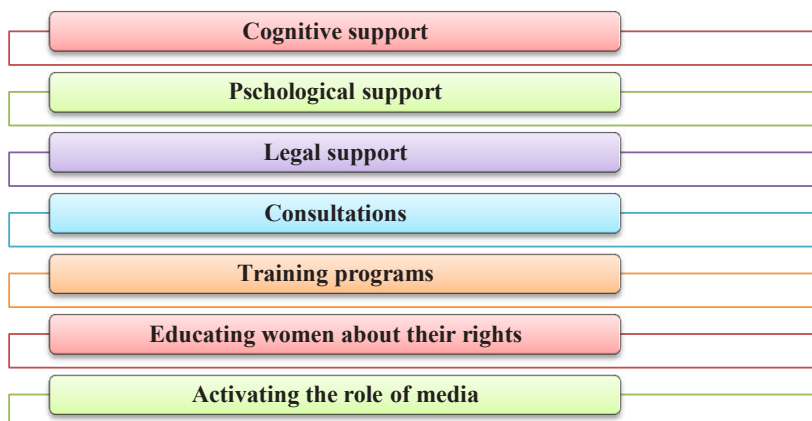
10 years ago, Samah, a 42-year-old teacher, resorted to the police station when her husband beat her severely during their frequent disputes. Her family threatened her if not giving up her complaint, returning home and apologizing to her husband. She said, "my husband beating me was something I could not bear, especially after I gave birth to my son and daughter. They cried when I was beaten. I did not complain. Yet sustaining several injuries prompted me to go to the police station and lodge a complaint." Samah told about the officer's reaction. He showed signs of resentment as she explained what happened. He pointed out that if every wife who was beaten by her husband resorted to the police, the police would have no time to securing people and devote themselves to solving trivial family problems<sup>4</sup>.

**• Recommendations to reduce violence against women:**

- 1- Rejecting and combating violence against women in all its forms is a collective responsibility that must be conducted through state agencies and civil society institutions.
- 2- Providing legal, psychological and cognitive support through awareness-raising training programs and counseling for women working in the health and education sectors, companies, institutions and local and international humanitarian organizations.
- 3- Educating women to claim and defend their human rights and never tolerate or waive those rights, as well as not remaining silent about any kind of violence that they may be exposed to inside or outside the work environment.
- 4- Increasing the number of awareness-raising programs to educate working women about their rights, and enable them to exercise these rights if they are victims of violence. Preventive efforts should include programs that seek to advance social and economic empowerment.
- 5- Confronting stereotypes and negative attitudes towards women cultural workers through preventive educational programs targeting different stakeholders, including community and religious leaders, representatives of the media, and other parties.
- 6- Enhancing the capacities of media workers to deal with violence against women in the family and workplace, and show the economic, social, cultural and psychological repercussions of such societal issue.

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4- Independent Arabia, Violence against Women, Amina Khairy, 2019



- 7- Conducting training courses on methods and mechanisms for filing complaints related to incidents of harassment, and ways to deal with the worker or employee who is exposed to it.
- 8- Providing appropriate and adequate means of transportation for all shifts, especially night shifts, in workplaces protects women from exposure to many forms of violence.
- 9- Hiring female officials on production lines in factories where there are a large number of female workers. This would reduce the chances of male supervisors to misuse their authority to sexually abuse female workers.
- 10- Preparing a document on protection against violence in the workplace by interested unions, submitting it to the employers for approval and implementation within the workplace, and educating male and female workers about such document through training courses and educational seminars.
- 11- Taking initiatives by unions to develop plans for media campaigns with the aim of overcoming stereotypes of professions in which women work intensively, such as nursing, and highlighting the economic importance of women's participation in the labor market.

### References:

- 1- <https://ar.wikipedia.org>
- 2- Nesmah Mansoor, et al., Peacebuilding without protection: Yemeni women's barriers to peace, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk>
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YIC@yemeninformation.org  
yemeninformation.org