

World Women's Democratic Confederatism



Introduction

The first quarter of the 21st century is now behind us. The tradition of civilisation based on power remains in place. War and conflict continue to be the most talked about reality, threatening the future of humanity. We are living under the conditions of a Third World War. Violence and power struggles, often resulting from imperialism, nationalism, and religious fundamentalism, threaten life everywhere. Wherever we look, war, death, loss, violence and poverty prevail.

The current historical period can also be characterised as a war on women. This war, which tries to hold our lives hostage, is empowered by global power relations. It manifests and deepens at the local level in different ways. We all feel this war waged by patriarchy on women in our bodies, in our emotions, in every moment of our lives.

And we think that an equally widespread, interrelated and deep struggle must be woven to resist it!



We do not separate the war that patriarchal, racist, and colonialist capitalism wages against women from the war against peoples and nature. The dominant system unites us through our shared suffering. However, we must also unite in our dreams of freedom, and in the path and power to realise these dreams. Defending each other, learning from each other, and opening the way to different futures by changing the world together should be the common foundation of our unity and victory.

Through this brochure, we would like to open up for discussion the 'World Women's Democratic Confederalism' organisation model proposed by the Kurdish Women's Movement as a response to this war on women and society. Some of us come from the Kurdish Women's Movement, while others among us have embraced its proposals. The idea that unites us is that under today's global conditions, the path to women's liberation, and with that, the liberation of all of society from exploitation and oppression, must be organised on the broadest possible scale. At the same time, our experiences so far have taught us that such



organization, while principled, must be flexible, allowing for space for different analyses and particular struggles. In our view on common struggle, we seek to find ways to enhance, rather than diminish, the uniqueness and autonomy of each struggle. At the same time, we believe that the power of unique and autonomous struggles to transform the world altogether can only be realised through multiple and strong connections.

Many of the abovementioned issues are being discussed across countless women's organisations, movements, activists, and scholars. There are quests for solutions and various manifestos. There are also difficulties and blockages, however. There are still inadequacies in the co-operation between struggles and in the development of effective and results-oriented alliances. Difficulties arise in implementing joint decisions made at regional and international conferences where hundreds of women's organisations meet. Functional coordination mechanisms fail to be established or sustained. Fragmentation, disconnection, and lack of solidarity are frequently expressed.



In this historical moment, we need to bravely, critically-self-critically, and with a radical approach, identify and analyse our points of weakness and difficulty, the obstacles that stand in front of us, and the issues that hold us back in our theoretical and practical struggle. We can deepen these analyses within our own organisational structures as well as collectively with each other based on a democratic culture, in a constructive, productive, energetic and motivating manner.

The primary aim of democratic confederal women's organising is to more effectively enable women's struggles and movements to weave multiple interconnected networks and thereby strengthen their hands within their own contexts. This would empower our collective capacity to resist and work towards a different world. Secondly, it would expand and strengthen our potential to take a stance against the war that is being waged against us all over the world. It would allow us to more effectively intervene in events all over the world, where we are often condemned by the dominant system to be mere spectators.



This brochure describes the political and intellectual origins and evolution of this idea, as well as some of the insights we have reached so far on our path towards putting it into practice. The text is divided into three sections: a brief analysis of the current state of the war on women, the historical background of the Kurdish Women's Movement's call and, finally, our democratic confederalist vision.

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The War on Women and Women's Resistance



The history of patriarchy is much older than that of capitalism. In many regions of the world, the first emergence of domination-based hierarchy can be linked to the institutionalisation of patriarchy. For this reason alone, the dismantling of patriarchy is one of the most important steps towards the destruction of all existing forms of hierarchy, exploitation, and domination. On the other hand, patriarchy has changed character over the last 500 years. By merging with colonialism, imperialism, racism, and capitalism, it has become both more complex and more destructive in every region of the world.

For thousands of years, women have resisted patriarchy by various means. They creatively found ways to pass down their resistance memories, their pain, and their belief in another future to new generations through their folk songs, lullabies, and through their crafts and weavings. Through love and care work, they continue to breathe life into the possibility of relationships that are not dependent on the market. Over the past hundreds of years, women and women's movements have been struggling and fighting back in response to the destruction caused by racist, patriarchal, heteronormative, and colonial capitalism by collectively organising themselves in the public sphere and on increasingly larger scales.

The dominant system, based on power and hierarchy, has stolen



from peoples and women the means of producing and reproducing life and society, the means of self-defence, and the means of imagining and creating new tomorrows. Thanks to their organised struggles, women began to regain and recreate these tools. The system launched a new and devastating war against them in response. This intensification is happening parallel to the ongoing exploitation of women's labor on an international scale under global capitalism, a system that spread through colonial and imperialist violence.

We encounter this war in many places.

It written in the pages of reports prepared by the statist system itself; it is in the occupation, pillaging, and destruction we witness everywhere; it permeates the collective and individual experiences of women; it appears in the news we watch every day.

This war is being waged through different methods, openly and covertly. We could list hundreds of examples, but if we were to summarise these methods under brief headings:

The first method is feminicide.

Violence infiltrates all areas of life; it comes in psychological, physical, economic, sexual, etc. forms. The patriarchal family often functions as a stem cell in this spiral of violence. More women die



due to direct patriarchal violence than in wars – which, of course, themselves are related to patriarchy.

The second method is political assassination and politicide.

Women are often at the forefront of women's and peoples' resistance movements. Yet, across all continents, women leaders are systematically murdered or imprisoned. Women across a wide spectrum — political leaders, journalists, thinkers, community leaders, feminist activists — are deliberately targeted with the intention of silencing their voices. The list of names of assassinated struggling women continues to grow. Even without being able to name them all, we carry countless names in our memories. Targeting individuals or movements fighting for justice and liberation aims to eradicate dissent, resistance, and the belief in the possibility of another world.

Thirdly, all wars are also fought over women's bodies. Wars are not merely fought between states and soldiers, but also target women, children, and nature.

While the United Nations claimed that the proportion of women killed in wars had doubled in 2023 compared to 2022, sexual violence continues to be a common denominator of all wars.



A year into Israel's genocidal war, the UN's Human Rights Office condemned that close to 70% of the fatalities it had verified for the first six months were women and children in Gaza. Women who have been forced to migrate multiple times face massive safety and health issues wherever they go. In the war in Congo, millions have died, with great numbers of women facing extreme attacks, including rape and sexual violence. These are just some recent examples.

Fourthly, in the name of conservatism, traditional and sexist role models and relations are imposed on women, and global lobbies are being organised to eradicate women's gains.

This is not a claim from dystopian fiction. Groups like the so-called Islamic State, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (and other al-Qaeda affiliates), Boko Haram, and the Taliban, have built their regimes around the violent domination of women in plain sight, from Nigeria to Afghanistan. Imperialist countries, especially the United States of America, have actively armed and empowered these groups. At the same time, the elites of the imperial core and other countries take common stances against reproductive and LGBTQI+ rights and declare war on gender-based struggles.

As a fifth method, women's struggles are being detached from their



radical and revolutionary roots, demands, dreams, and strategies for building a new future.

Liberal discourse targets women's organised power by pulling the struggle into elite circles such as government, business, and academia. In this way, equality for a few within an oppressive system is put above the notion of liberation for all. Among current trends are, for instance, the rhetoric of 'feminist foreign policy' or 'Women, Peace, Security' within institutions that sustain the hegemonic system (such as the EU, nation-states, NATO, etc.), the confinement of feminist theory to academia, the incitement of ideological contradictions that emphasise difference more than commonality, and the commodification of women's radical discourses and initiatives by the capitalist market in every form. Meanwhile, movements are rendered financially dependent on the resources of the system.

In the face of all this, women's resistance, of course, continues in different forms. Different methods are being adopted in the fight against the war on women. Collective organisation and communication between struggles are on the rise. These experiences, past and present, are the basis of our call and discussion for what we call World Women's Democratic Confederalism.



The long and rich history of revolutionary, socialist, proletarian, anti-colonial, and feminist internationalism is a testament to the power of solidarity and common struggle in the fight for an alternative, free life without violence and domination. For more than a century, numerous international alliances, congresses, and organisations have been formed with the aim of uniting women across borders against oppression, exploitation, and injustice. The fight for women's liberation has always been inseparable from the struggle against imperialism, capitalism, and colonialism. This historical legacy, still present today, is our common heritage, one that connects us to generations of struggling and revolutionary women around the world.

The growth and transformations that women's movements around the world have undergone in recent years are a major source of hope. In some geographies, these can be considered revolutionary. From Argentina to Sudan, from Palestine to Kashmir, resistance continues against the colonisation of life. In Mexico, Italy, and Kenya, actions against femicide see millions of women taking to the streets to voice their rebellion. In Chiapas, Kurdistan, the Philippines, and beyond, women militants developing their self-defence inspire many women around the world.

Women guard and continue their struggles under the Taliban re-



gime in Afghanistan; in Abya Yala, the defence of Pachamama defies the threats of multinational corporations and paramilitary forces; women make and remake life under genocide in Palestine; in Balochistan, women lead long marches against disappearances. From the women sentenced to death for political work or killed for refusing to obey patriarchal morality codes in Iran to women subjected to sexual violence in war and genocide in Guatemala, Rwanda, Bosnia and beyond; to women revolutionaries assassinated in Paris - the solidarity with life-defending women continues to grow.

At the same time, in the spirit of self-criticism, we must acknowledge that the implementation and sustainability of international efforts have never been without challenges. Class-based hierarchies, racism, colonial attitudes, and ideological contradictions have at times led to exclusion, fragmentation, or the perpetuation of power even within our movements that seek unity. Nevertheless, perhaps precisely due to this, the experiences and lessons from past efforts remain meaningful and must be carefully examined in a critical and self-critical manner in the 21st century. They offer invaluable insights into how we can continue to build stronger, more inclusive and sustainable networks of common struggle in the here and now and for the future.



Before we turn to describing the origins and perspective of the idea of World Women's Democratic Confederalism, we mention some recent global developments that inspire it:

Women's struggles are transcending nationalism and borders, animating transnational horizons.

"Ni Una Menos", "Me too", "Jin Jiyan Azadi". These slogans, which have assembled women from different walks of life across borders in recent years, express the potential of transnational imagination of women's struggles as well as the support and solidarity these can offer each other. In many places, women do not seek or expect solutions to their problems from the state, but instead, critique the sexist essence and oppressive structures of the nation-state. They search globally for common paths of struggle and resistance against feminicide and the war on women, from the exploitation of labor to the suffocation of the right to bodily self-determination.

By rejecting colonial Western epistemology, women are creating new and diverse political and social imaginaries.

Women living in the Southern Hemisphere, indigenous peoples besieged by settler colonies, and Black and Brown migrant women are linking the war against women to racism, colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and heteronormativity. In doing so, they are



raising consciousness about the fact that every issue demands a radical intervention by struggling and organised women. Indigenous peoples' decolonial perspectives on life, revolutionary Black feminism, Jineolojî as developed by Kurdish women, etc. - all these and more approaches weave futures beyond the state and capitalism by drawing attention to the importance of liberating all realms of life simultaneously and through the fight against power, materially and ideologically.

Women's struggles' richness in methods and creativity is rapidly spreading.

No matter how big or small, women's movements and struggles around the world are rapidly adopting and adapting different methods and experiences to their own localities. The links between struggles that are learning from each other are getting stronger. The search for mutual awareness and the creation of bonds of struggle is intensifying. A dance, a song, a slogan, a symbolic act of protest can spread very quickly, if it resonates despite cultural and linguistic differences. Autonomously organised women's structures are striving for solidarity and cooperation across a range of issues. From justice struggles to search for the disappeared, from the right to mourn to the right to land, from peace movements to climate



justice struggles, and from labour struggles to the fight against domestic violence—they are intertwining their language and actions.

This vast accumulation and potential inspire us. We see ourselves as part of this flow.

We follow other collectives around the world that are working to create a different and free life. We move with them, draw inspiration from them. We learn from both their defeats and their successes, seeing ourselves as their heirs. We reflect on how to weave the future.

On the other hand, like many women, we believe that despite all this, women's organising around different issues alone is not sufficient to stop the war on women, intervene in the future, become rooted and meaningfully organised inside society, and create a free life. The levels reached by women's resistance highlight the need for a more inclusive and solution-oriented perspective and model of struggle. In other words, we need an organisational impulse that will turn women's struggles, which are developing revolutionary and often internationalist stances and are fostering new dreams in many parts of the world, into an effective force of intervention.





The Kurdish Women's Movement and the Call for World Women's Democratic Confederalism



The Kurdish Women's Movement emerged from within the struggle of the Kurdish people against colonialism and occupation. Kurdistan was divided into four parts after World War I with the establishment of the nation-states of Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. The current form of the organised revolutionary women's struggle in Kurdistan stems from the ideological and practical path paved by the Kurdistan Freedom Movement, the broad liberation struggle that originated with the foundation of the socialist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), also popularly known as the last Kurdish uprising, whose roots go back to the late 1970s. Over time, the Kurdistan Freedom Movement became a popular and society-based movement that centres women's liberation as a primary condition of society's freedom. This development was a result of the autonomous women's struggle within the movement, from the beginning actively supported, intellectually and practically, by Abdullah Öcalan. Co-founder and leader of the movement, Öcalan has been imprisoned and isolated on Imrali Island following his abduction in a NATO operation in 1999. He analyses patriarchy as being at the root of all other forms of power, domination, violence, and oppression and deeply entangled with state and capitalism. Soon, and as a result of relentless struggle within the movement and inside Kurdish society, the principle of women's autonomy



and the centrality of the task of dismantling patriarchy from the root came to be unnegotiable aspects of the revolutionary freedom struggle in Kurdistan. This impacted the approach to struggle and practical organisation. One of the movement's most important aims has been for peoples and women to reclaim and creatively reconstruct the means of self-organisation, self-defence, production and reproduction that had been taken from them.

At the same time, the roots, nature, and faces of the organised Kurdish women's struggle are plural. On the one hand, they go back to the struggles of women who joined the armed struggle against colonialism. On the other hand, they draw on women's movements that resisted state oppression and violence, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and forced displacement, as well as those who founded associations, institutions, and organisations to reconnect with their homeland after migration. It also includes women members of political parties that conduct politics based on representation within the systems established by the occupying states. The movement is organised in the mountains where the guerrillas dwell, in cities and rural areas, in prisons, in politics, in social life, and within different democratic coalitions.

In the 1990s, the Kurdish Women's Movement expanded its struggle in a way that transcended belief, class, and regional differences,



actively involving the participation and mission of individuals and communities in various ways. Having simultaneously been subjected to colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy, it sought to develop organisational models that would fight all three. This model has varied in depth and flexibility depending on needs and conditions. Expansion in practice (action, politics, organisation), enabled deeper analysis rooted inside the struggle inside a colonised and largely impoverished and dispossessed society.

The movement developed theories against the decay and siege systems of power and domination created in the mind. Theoretically, it accumulated rich ideological, philosophical, and intellectual insights. Practically, it created powerful popular organisational tools. Theory and practice were always intertwined with each other and entangled with the anti-colonial struggle.

This intellectual and practical accumulation, from the early 2000s onward explicitly organised around Öcalan's framework of "Democratic Confederalism"—a system of organising society outside of the grip of capitalism and the state, through autonomously organised grassroots communes, peoples' assemblies, self-determined cooperatives and popular academies—transformed into an autonomous women's confederal system in Kurdistan and the diaspora. Since 2014, this effort is organised under the umbrella of Komalên



Jinên Kurdistan (KJK), the Kurdistan Women's Communities. It is both an autonomous women's system vis-à-vis the general struggle and a relationship between the different components of the women's movement. In other words, given the many historical experiences of defeat and marginalisation of the women's causes as a 'secondary issue' even within historical liberation struggles, it is a guarantee to sustain the existence and radicality of the women's liberation struggle.

This democratic confederal system within the Kurdish Women's Movement over the past decade can be defined as an organisational model based on enabling society to build flexible ties and networks outside of the state, based on its own needs, and expanding from the grassroots. In other words, a flexible formation that allows different segments of society — in terms of belief, class, region, ethnicity, language, culture, profession, etc. — to be autonomous within themselves, while establishing connections with others at intersecting points. This system aims to build a way of life that limits the state and can exist without the need for it.

Through this approach, the Kurdish Women's Movement has made significant progress towards the social transformation it envisions. It also attained more lasting results inside society. It has created and presented alternatives for women across spheres of life, such as



politics, health, economy, culture, alliances, education, and more. Currently, the Kurdish Women's Movement is organised within and across the borders of the four states that colonise Kurdistan, as well as in the large diaspora in Europe. Additionally, in places like Russia, Australia, Canada, and Japan, where Kurdish people had to migrate and where they have been living for many years, there are different structures that establish flexible working connections with these structures. The scope of this organisational effort is quite broad. It includes a wide network that encompasses various forms, like communes, assemblies, councils, institutions, associations, academies, cooperatives, and organisations, covering different areas like politics, education, culture, diplomacy, economy, and, particularly, self-defence (including autonomous women's self-defence units engaged in armed struggle against occupying states). As a philosophical and intellectual effort towards the revolutionary transformation of mentality, the work of Jineolojî carries a crucial mission.

The internationalist solidarity and support initiatives that the Kurdish Women's Movement started in the 1990s gradually transformed into a conscious political strategy since the 2000s onwards. As such, the movement has gained significant experience in bringing together women and women's organisations and struggles with



different aims, backgrounds, accumulated knowledges, living and legal conditions, and organisational needs. It has also come a long way in enabling women in different regions to bring about change in their immediate environments and on their own terms, while simultaneously becoming a common social and political intervention force. This path was not without sacrifice and hardship. And there is still a long way ahead.

The idea of World Women's Democratic Confederalism emerged in this context.

Stating that the Kurdish Women's Movement is the source of this idea, which is presented as a proposal to women worldwide, is not an attempt at claiming ownership. On the contrary, it aims to show that this model has a more general potential to be build an alternative to patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism, which restrict women's lives in every geography of the world, including the Middle East. Indeed, this model contains clear similarities with the historic struggles of indigenous peoples, especially in Abya Yala, and it inspires women in different regions. In this regard, we hope that the Kurdish Women's Movement's transparent presentation of its experience and the sharing of different confederal experiences will contribute to a new path for women's organisedness worldwide.



In recent years, the Kurdish Women's Movement has strengthened its existing bonds through different structures (such as assemblies, committees, units, strategic alliance-building, the Young Women's Movement, Jineolojî, and other works) that can be defined as components of its internal confederal system. It sustained and consolidated connections with many different local struggles and transnational movements around the world, large and small, through numerous seminars, panels, conferences, educations, and camps in different cities. This ongoing process showed ways in which the Kurdish Women's Movement's methods of struggle, tools, intellectual and theoretical accumulation can be applicable and useful for other movements.

This process of creating a women's confederal system, a broad, flexible and continuous organisation to respond to the needs of society and connect with different segments of it, began to revive the values that society had lost with the institutionalisation of patriarchy. It reanimated collective memories of resistance. It showed that the struggle against the system is achievable: a solution perspective that is not trapped "between the hopes of utopias for the future and the longing for golden ages of the past" (Öcalan, 2013), but rather one that can be seen and lived as tangible victory in the present. The confederalism, as a system, would allow differenc-



es to coexist without homogenising them—regardless of borders, language, cultural origins, etc.—as it spreads from the grassroots level, created a crucial shift in the revolutionary perspective on the fight against the system. It showed that revolution is not about a mere change of power, the replacement of the old with something new, but about radical transformation, the creation of conditions for living without dependency on the capitalist state system—an ongoing and active construction process based on the memory and roots of society. The results achieved and the perspective that emerged so far have excited and given hope to everyone involved in this process. That the Kurdish Women’s Movement has inspired other movements reveals the potential for the creative adaptability of this idea.

In 2018, the Kurdish Women’s Movement officially opened the idea of World Women’s Democratic Confederalism, which it had until then developed within its own context, to wider discussion. It initiated the Network Women Weaving the Future for this purpose. The network was formed with the participation of women’s movements from Abya Yala, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Initially, the network focussed on discovering commonalities in the struggles of women from different geographies and developing methods for sharing experiences through a series of meetings.



In this context, two international conferences were organised. The first conference, themed ‘Revolution in the Making’, was held on 6th and 7th October 2018 in Frankfurt. The second conference took place in Berlin on 5th and 6th November 2022 under the slogan ‘Our Revolution: Liberating Life’. At these conferences women discussed, from their own contexts, the struggle to build free life on a global scale, shared their experiences, and proposed common strategies. These conferences were important steps in concretising the need for women to unite against global patriarchy and capitalism. During both the preparation phase and the conferences themselves, discussions were held on how solidarity between women’s movements could be strengthened and how local struggles could participate in larger international revolutionary processes for women to collectively build the future.

Since then, there has been an active effort to share the idea of World Women’s Democratic Confederalism and lay the foundations to put it into practice with the women’s struggles that were reached. Undoubtedly, we do not have the means to know about every single struggle happening in the world. However, every movement we have connected with and every discussion and activity we have engaged in so far has made this need to coordinate and fight together even more apparent. This strengthens our hope and resolve as we



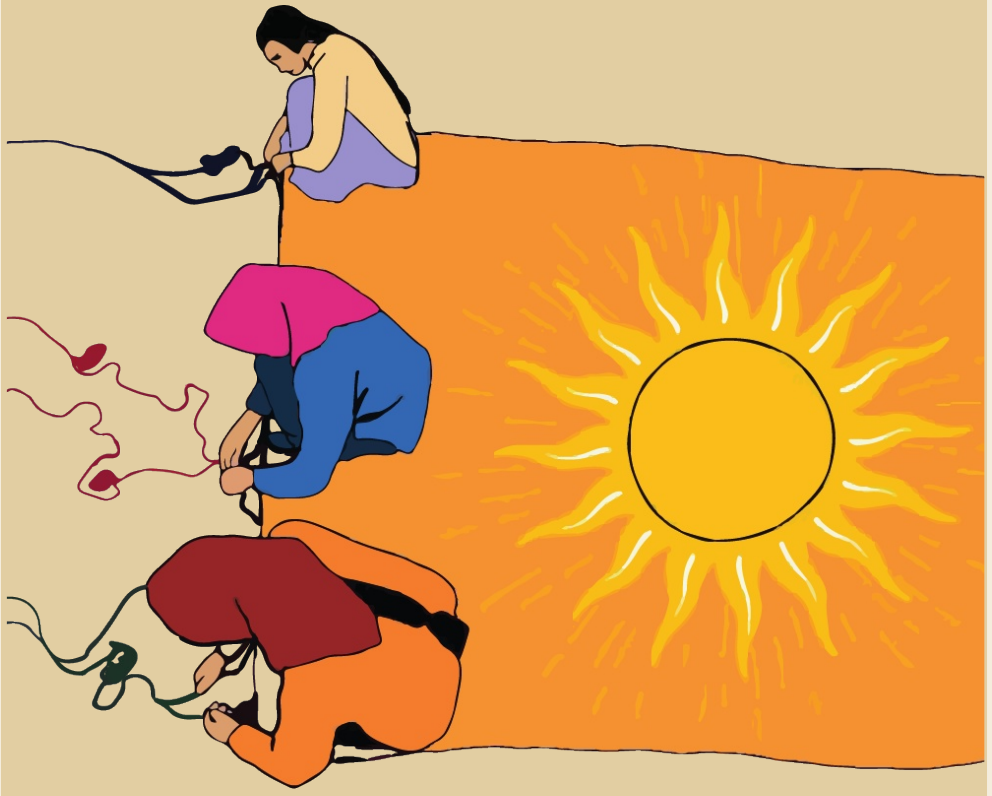
weave the future. This hope and resolve in turn are our strongest foundation when proposing a democratic confederalism of women worldwide.

The Kurdish Women's Movement's experience shows us that democratic confederalism can grow struggles, develop continuity, offer solutions, and include diverse groups. Our aim is not to make women around the world sign up for something already prepared, nor to simply increase the membership of existing organisations. Instead, our goal is to create connections and strengthen links between struggles, and if necessary, create new unions, organisations, and institutions according to needs, thereby expanding this network.





World Women's Democratic Confederation



General Principles and Framework

With the call to weave World Women's Democratic Confederationism together, there are important aspects and issues that will need to be clarified and determined collectively, both in terms of mentality and organisation. For concrete perspectives, we believe that sharing with each other the vast wealth of experience we possess as women's movements across various geographies is the best way forward. And from there, we can begin determining the most meaningful style, approach, method, and mechanisms for common women's politics.

One of these concerns administration. Revolutionary struggle cannot be led with loose and formless networks if it is to meaningfully transform our conditions. However, the alternative to this cannot be hierarchy and bureaucracy either.

The framework of Democratic Confederationism should not be understood as the desire for the formation of yet another union or transnational association. It is also not an umbrella organisation. World Women's Democratic Confederationism also does not imply completely loose, disorganised, or uncoordinated structure. Rather, it is a framework for a multi-dimensional, multi-layered system of organisational principles and coordination, based on intercon-



nectedness and simultaneity. It should be envisioned as a model that creates unity in multiplicity and achieves this without building centralism.

In Democratic Confederalism, the essential debate and decision-making power belongs to the grassroots, to the individual units or 'self' (collective, group, organisation, movement, etc.) themselves. Through democratic confederal organising, we can form larger unities without denying the respective selves. In fact, these can gradually multiply from the local to the global level, but without loosening ties. This model does not perceive the local as an alternative to the global, but gives meaning to democratic autonomy of every structure within a unifying whole. Moreover, every unit has the potential to establish its democratic confederal relations, from the local to the global. For example, ecological women's organisations, rural and peasant women's platforms, disabled women organisations, artists' collectives, etc., in one territory could first weave confederal networks within their own specific context or region. As they expand from the local to the global (while weaving at the continental or regional level), they meet and connect with others organised in the same field and on the same ground.



In that sense, a women's confederal system is not about linking local and specific struggles to a central structure. On the contrary, while weaving this network from small neighbourhoods to regions and continents and beyond, we must not impose centralised goals and ignore the needs of the local and particular, pushing aside and postponing their priorities to serve central purposes. Rather, we aspire to strengthen them through connection.

The global aims and programmes we set should in fact have the potential to mobilise and empower local practice. Already, women all over the world are weaving alternatives, thread by thread, with the power of their blood, tears, sweat, emotions, and thoughts. The key word to ensure sustainable results and that no one's needs take precedence over another's, or that one reality meets another without being dissolved, is 'coordination'. Together, we need to find answers about the principles and styles through which the relationship between local, regional, and global struggles should be established, and how this can be transformed into theoretical, political, social, cultural, and self-defence power for all of us. Today, most women's struggles are largely multidimensional. They are not limited to a single agenda or goal but engage with many social and political issues. Coordination in this sense primarily plays a functional and creative role in the implementation of common agen-



das. For instance, numerous associations, initiatives, platforms, organisations, etc. working to combat violence against women can establish a dynamic of relationships that stretches from the local to the global. In this way, they can develop joint struggles and coordination when needed. Perhaps the most effective structures are regional confederalisms. Confederated women's organisations, built region by region, can form a complementary, fluid, and continuous network of relationships and alliances. What is crucial is that the units, while autonomous in themselves, remain responsible for one another. Furthermore, a democratic confederal system does not constitute an alternative to existing international women's unions, federations, or umbrella organisations. It will in fact engage with and even intertwine with them. It is a model in which not only local units, but also the alliances they form, can participate without losing their uniqueness and autonomy, but by in fact gaining broader platforms for struggle on their own terms, without dependency on the statist and capitalist order and its conditional resources.

As such, one aim of World Women's Democratic Confederalism is to make visible the countless organised forms and confederal ties that women have already established to protect life against the attacks and limits imposed by patriarchy. Even if the focus, method, or form may differ from one struggle to another, the aim of confed-



eralism should be to capture common threads among them. In doing so, we can assemble diverse struggle traditions and organisational cultures not in a way that dominates or co-opts, but in a way that complements, strengthens, and reveals each one's potential.

Freedom and struggle are woven into the mentality of Democratic Confederation. In its understanding of organisation, there is no place for class-based hierarchical approaches, nationalism, racism, or fascism. Democratic Confederation, based on democratic - equal and free - active and conscious participation, is therefore highly sensitive to all forms of authoritarian mentality, understanding, and approaches. It analyses power as an area where exploitation and male domination reproduce themselves. There must be clarity on the difference between gaining collective strength through comradeship and being in or longing for power.

Lastly, Democratic Confederation is not an organisational form with feet in the air, disconnected from resistance or above the people. Its view on internationalism is not based on a globalisation based on the capitalist market and the nation-state, but instead grounded in local women's struggles, drawing power and legitimacy from the grassroots. It expresses the democratic bonds



and alliances between existing, real organised collective women's struggles. Therefore, if we want to meaningfully speak of World Women's Democratic Confederalism, it is essential that organising at the local level is deepened and strengthened. Unions that are empty on the ground cannot be meaningful or substantive.

Tasks ahead

To ensure that our struggle creates new tomorrows in defiance of those who wish to erase our existence, we must act, become conscious, and organise together. The only guarantee of our survival, our self-defence, is to come together, to protect and develop our differences, which reflect the diversity of the universe, to become rivers, streams, waterfalls, and to revive the world that fascism has tried to dry out. We must defend ourselves against the forces that try to destroy, eliminate, and instrumentalise the communalities that we live in and that give us confidence, the bonds of love that give us joy, and the care relations that give meaning to our lives. And we must proactively build a life and world that does justice to all.

Carrying well-meaning and strong analysis is far from enough. We must fundamentally care about functioning. Developing actual



solutions along the abovementioned lines and paving the way collectively is just as important as the analysis itself. At the same time, we must contribute to the power of solutions, not by becoming the same, subordinating, or forcing ourselves to fit in, but by protecting our roots and priorities. We must be able to emerge from the current historical moment in favour of women's freedom.

We must resist and build with a revolutionary perspective

The dominant system is integrated; if we are to resist the institutionalisation of patriarchy across all areas of life (economy, politics, law, health, education, and even our bodies), we need a unified liberation struggle that overcomes fragmentation and disconnection. We are certainly not the first or only ones who recognise this need. There are many international, regional, and continents-wide women's organisations, federations, alliances, and other institutions working for this purpose. Through various platforms, networks, and forums, women's movements are trying to unify their struggles at different levels. In fact, we, too, participate in some of these, and carry out joint work with others. However, given the current conditions and needs, we still fall short. Our collective and enormous accumulation and experience should nourish, strengthen



and mobilise every movement.

Clearly, we cannot achieve a radical breakthrough within the dominant system, relying on its tools and methods, its prescribed ways of thinking, material resources, and the limited rights it grants. Even if we succeed in some ways, there is no guarantee that our achievements will be permanent. We can see this risk within ourselves but also when evaluating the experiences of women's movements around the world, past and present.

There are important lessons to be learned from the struggles of women everywhere. Based on these lessons, we can say, with determination: Without a radical break with the capitalist system, both mentally and practically, we cannot build spaces for free life and struggle. This is not utopian. The essence of the concept of 'women's revolution', as we understand it, is based on building alternatives outside the system. It is based on continuously limiting the influence of patriarchy and all other systems of oppression through ongoing creation. It is in this sense that we claim 'revolution'.

Revolution, for us, is not a future day, but the flow of freedom that develops in the moment and ensures its continuity through organisation and struggle. It is protracted and ongoing, wherever we organise meaningfully and sustainably towards a life with fundamentally different conditions. Our definition of 'women's revolution' is



to think about long-term political goals and protracted strategies and plans. We need politics and courses of action that can quickly and effectively mobilise and engage all women, based on urgent needs. We do not have a magic wand for this. However, we can find our path by following the clues we have.

For example, as an existential priority, we need to organise against all forms of violence (cultural, physical, mental, political, etc.) that directly target or affect women. We must express more loudly our desire to live and how we wish to live. Therefore, practically, World Women's Democratic Confederalism should centre around ensuring women's survival, enabling them to take decisions about their own lives and to implement their choices. At the same time, the quality and nature of organisation is of crucial importance. As mentioned earlier, within the framework we propose for common struggle beyond borders, every unit, institution, movement, collective, party, etc., within this effort should see itself responsible as a part of a network in the making. Growth and systematisation are key for this perspective on organisation as a foundation of World Women's Democratic Confederalism.

Hence, if we fail to develop according to a genuinely democratic, confederal understanding, what will emerge are structures that are authoritarian, bureaucratic, misogynist, and uncritically serve tra-



therefore related to this. It is about moving society and life away from the boundaries of patriarchy and other power structures and building spaces where women can create and build their own lives on their own free terms without waiting for anyone or anything. 'Building' is a broad concept - from a woman realising that the political-ideological scenario imposed on her by the patriarchal system as fate is not her destiny, to establishing a cooperative, offering self-defence training, organising a women's gathering, or sending a message of solidarity to a place she has never heard of before. It is necessary to build spaces of freedom against the patriarchal system, from the smallest to the most widespread and comprehensive; we need to liberate all aspects of our lives from the siege of the system, one by one. Women's process of constructing an autonomous system in Rojava/Northeast Syria amid war and great hardship over the past years provides a concrete example in this regard.

We must raise consciousness and rename the world on our own terms

Throughout history, women have often led numerous actions and efforts with slogans like 'we defend life' or 'we want to live'. While we support this, for us, the question 'We want to live, but how?'/ 'How



to live?’ is also important. How will we sustain the life we imagine? The patriarchal system is so normalised and impactful everywhere also because it has historically sought to empower and legitimise its mentality and ensure its reproduction by creating deep and lasting thought structures. The struggle for women’s freedom should also be directed towards breaking the influence of these. We cannot overcome and defeat the patriarchal, capitalist and colonial system with practical rejections and resistance alone. We need strong intellectual foundations to enlighten and guide our paths.

The aim of confederalism is not to establish or define a singular ideological line. However, contrary to the lie told by liberalism that ‘the age of ideologies is over’, we must strengthen our ideological, scientific, and philosophical foundations. Our practice can yield more lasting results if we can break the system’s hegemonic grip over the structures of thought.

With the exception of those that are the product of fascism and its derivatives (colonialism, racism, chauvinist nationalism, religious fundamentalism, etc.), we believe that all positions aiming to advance women’s freedom and put an end to the oppression faced by exploited peoples can coexist within the embrace of confederalism. We attach importance to seeing ideological differences in such a way that they can inspire, push, criticise, support and, if



necessary, transform each other.

Given the plurality of epistemic life worlds, building on the richness of different ideological approaches and perspectives is one of the most important tools through which we can raise women's autonomous consciousness from different standpoints. We must find ways for women to share their own experiences, histories, worldviews, and methods while weaving same sort of shared and collective, liberationist mindset (e.g., through joint action, education, assemblies, seminars, etc.). Indeed, we need an enlightened consciousness that can research more, examine more thoroughly, analyse current situations quickly, and propose more profound solutions.

For this, consciousness-raising efforts must unfold in a holistic manner to facilitate the emergence of free thinking in women, the development of their searches, and the growth of their pioneering aspirations. In response to a patriarchal system that constantly renews and positions itself in every sphere of life, we must become more competent, able to take strategic steps, develop political stances, and become pioneers and leaders with strong analytical power. Collectively, we need to radically understand and critique updated sexist policies and refined forms of oppressive mascu-



linity to shape our political stances ideologically and politically. We cannot to just react in the aftermath of attacks premediated by the system, which increasingly operates through the control and management of perception, information, education, culture and knowledge.

The programmes we develop, stemming from certain needs, particularities, and points of blockage, may constantly change but they should empower everyone and leave behind no one. The most vulnerable and oppressed women must be at the heart of our revolutionary intellectual efforts. In any case, we need to create spaces and opportunities where we feel safe and can talk about everything: the exploitation of women's labour and bodies, migration, health, ecology, issues surrounding children and families, our subconscious traumas, and more. In other words, we should be able to untangle the knots we encounter while weaving. This is why we believe in a kind of consciousness-raising political education in which everyone will teach everyone, and everyone will learn from everyone.

We must organise and defend ourselves in all spheres of life

Women's Confederalism is not an organisational form to operate only through action. Of course, this aspect is crucial. But we need



ditional culture. In other words, we should neither cultivate disorganisation, nor cling onto organisation that, in the name of organisation, ignores the needs of the local, generalises, centralises, and imposes rigid boundaries. We must be able to support all sections of society to participate actively and consciously. Uniting different identities on the basis of freedom and diversity is something that women can achieve more than others. Strengthening one should strengthen everyone.

To continue with the example of violence: defending our lives is of course fundamentally also about resisting the systemic inequality that results from relations based on exploitation and domination, particularly the use of women as cheap labour, under global capitalism and imperialism. It is about establishing a self-sufficient economic system in balance with ecology and nature. It's about creating alternative systems and searching for solutions in the here and now against the economy that commodifies, oppresses, and subjugates women and society.

Another related and urgent fundamental task is the organisation of women's self-defence. The scale of femicide, sexual violence, attacks on protests and struggles, the targeted and systematic assassination of women leaders, the protection of perpetrators all make clear that we cannot expect justice or protection from the



state. Women's autonomous self-defence is the only way forward. Self-defence should not be viewed solely as armed resistance. While this dimension exists—women's autonomous self-defence forces in Kurdistan are a great example of this—women's self-defence is based on diversity in methods and forms. Answering the question 'what kind of self-defence?' requires both the joint examination and evaluation of various current and historical experiences and the development of effective paths and methods according to different spaces and conditions. We should aim to create a common understanding and philosophy of self-defence from women's perspective.

One could further expand on the fundamental tasks of World Women's Democratic Confederation. Our aim here was to present some of them in a draft-like manner, as a general framework. The core theoretical and structural formation process will have to be carried out together.

We always experience feelings of possibility when we come together in conferences, meetings, and gatherings. But we have often not been able to give our common efforts lasting forms (in the sense of a network, organisation, or structure). We have not been able to create a continuous and sustainable organisational form that



generates the energy, which shows that women, when organised, are incredibly powerful, creative, healing, and hopeful. We have achieved a lot, but we have not been able to make what we have created so far a functional threat against the dominant system.

Let us reflect on the metaphor of 'weaving the future'. When we begin to weave Democratic Confederation, a model of organised networking, each knot and stitch will reveal a new motif, a new harmony will emerge from the colourful threads of life, and a new pattern will come to light. In the act of weaving, each one of the motifs, which are meaningful on their own, become more visible, beautiful, and impactful as they all grow and spread. For thousands of years, skilled women's hands have been weaving life, art, and economy, creating new things as they went. It is difficult to predict what kind of work will emerge throughout our weaving process. However, we already know that this weaving will continue with relentless resistance and create magnificent beauties! Ultimately, when what has been woven emerges, we should all experience its usefulness, beauty, and the pride of having created it together. We should all feel responsible for adding new threads to a revolutionary, exciting, enthusiastic, hopeful, and resilient process of weaving our history and another world.



With World Women's Democratic Confederalism, everyone can be a part of this act of weaving in some way. How many stitches they will make, how many motifs they will create, and what colours and patterns they will use can be determined by their own conditions. The result may be more beautiful and effective than expected, and may evolve into other paths with new ways, possibilities, and tools. Weaving is an act in which everyone who contributes a stitch will have beautified it and shaped it. It is a walk without sharply defined boundaries and endings, a form of communication with sentences that have no full stops.

As the Network Women Weaving the Future, we have the claim of facilitating the practical implementation of the idea of World Women's Democratic Confederalism. We need your active and diverse suggestions, opinions, contributions and participation in determining the forms this idea will take, as well as working methods, communication networks, and means of struggle.

We are excited to materialise this idea, which empowers us individually and collectively, in whatever form, method, or place that may be.





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