



Hatun must not be forgotten!

Nazanin Boromand
MC of the Conference
Cologne, Germany
8th march 2006

Good evening, Dear guests,

My name is Nazanin Boromand. Welcome to our conference. I will be your MC for this evening.

Today is March 8th, the International Woman Day, and I would like to congratulate you all on this day. Despite the progress, which has been achieved by the struggle of progressive movements for equal rights and rights of the women in the last century, we are in many countries still witness oppression and use of violence against women in the most barbarous forms.

We have become witness to honour killings in Europe again and again. The campaign against honor killings in Germany 'Never forget Hatun' has been formed to fight against this barbarous ritual together. We would like to highlight the situation and together provide ways of fighting against it and put an end to violence against women.

Hatun Aynur Sürücü was one of the women, who was the victim of this crime more than a year ago. Her name and her life shall remain in the minds of people in Germany. We have to take action to end such criminal acts. We have to draw people's attention to the reasons behind factors which contributed to her death and prevent such tragedies happening again. Hatun must not be forgotten!

I would like to thank all the speakers who accepted our invitation and are here today. You will hear the opinions of our speakers this evening. Thank you all (the floor) for attending. We will have a session later when you can make contributions to the conference

I also would like to thank our interpreters for their difficult job of helping us with the translations.



International Women's Day 2006



Speech by Azar Majedi
Conference Cologne,
Germany
8th march 2006

Political Islam, a sophisticated machinery of suppression!

First of all I would like to congratulate everyone here on 8th March, International Women's Day. However one can not help but feel so sad to see that in 21st century, in the year 2006 celebrating the International Women's Day one has to hear these horrendous figures that Ayan Hirsi just told us. We read and hear them but tend to forget. I don't think we forget because we don't care. We forget because it is our self defence mechanism. How can we sleep every night to know that every year around 2 million women in the world are killed based on gender oppression, discrimination in one way or another?

Ayan compared it with Rwanda. I remember when Rwandan catastrophe happened. We were all so outraged. One million people were brutally killed in an ethnic genocide and we became outraged that world did not do enough to stop it. It happens all the time. Every year a Rwanda happens in the world and we don't do anything about it and forget it! I don't think we don't care. We are conscious human beings otherwise we wouldn't be here. It is difficult to bear such tragedies on our minds every single day knowing that we can't do anything about it. But we COULD do something about it. This is what I am trying to talk about here today. What can we do about it?

Ayan talked about genocide, ethnic genocide, and racial genocide and now we know there is sexual or gender genocide as we have gender apartheid. There is gender apartheid in countries under the influence or the rule of Islam or Islamic ridden countries. I won't call them Muslim countries. By Islamic countries I mean countries being under Islamic rule or groups or movements or

political Islam.

Some of you may be too young to think that there was racial apartheid in South Africa. I am one of those who do remember. I fought against racial apartheid in the 70's and 80's. I was part of the movement against racial apartheid in South Africa and I still remember those days. I still remember when Nelson Mandela was freed and when apartheid was dismantled in South Africa. It was a nice day. Dismantling racial apartheid was one of the few good things that happened at the end of the 20th century. And I hope that one of these days I hear the same thing about gender apartheid. We need to dismantle sexual apartheid in Iran. So we have to build a movement as strong as the one built against racial apartheid in South Africa. I think that is one of the things we can do. And if we do that and become a member of such movement we can sleep better at night and we feel better about ourselves.

Violence

We are here today to talk about violence against women and against honour killings. What a strange name they have given it: "honour killing"! Or "crime of passion"! So romantic! We are talking about passion and all of a sudden someone gets killed, maimed and the killer walks away! Passion, isn't it? Passion is nice. We see it in films. Or we call it honour killing. It is related to honour. "Honour?" Is this supposed to glorify the murder? Is it supposed to make it look acceptable?! Is it to dignify the murderer? All these names are used in order to mitigate the concept of murder. They are trying to say it does not matter if a woman is raped, if a woman is killed. They are killed for a good cause. They are killed so some

“sacred” political and religious ideas and traditions are preserved. It boils down to this: It doesn’t matter, it is the culture, and it is the religion. It is crime of passion, it is honour killing.

Or think about this! Violence against women at home is called domestic violence. Automatically the word domestic softens the act. It makes it a personal matter. Domestic has these connotations: cosiness, privacy, warmth. So it cannot be that bad. It is not that outrageous. Can you see the trick the sexist and misogynist values play on us?

We have to name it as it really is. It is murder. It is first degree murder and has to be dealt with as first degree murder. No mitigation for in judging the crime, no leniency for those who commit it, be it the father, the husband, the brother or the cousin. No mitigation! It has to be dealt with as the most horrendous act, as act of terrorism. The culprits should be treated the same as terrorists who blow up a train, the underground, a bus. This is one of things we have to establish. We should make states and governments deal with those who kill women for “passion” or “honour” as first degree murder without any mitigation.

They say it is their culture and religion, we have to respect them, we should be tolerant! Let me tell you, we do not respect any values or ideology that does not respect human beings, women’s rights, children’s rights, liberty or equality. We do not respect religion, faith, ideology, political ideology that instigates murder and violence against women. How could we respect them? Humanity has fought for equality, secularism, freedom of expression, gender equality, and universality of human rights. What has happened to us at the end of the 20th century? Why are we talking about tolerance and respect

for inhuman values and ideas at the beginning of the 21st century?!

I am not talking about Muslims. I really want to emphasize and clarify this point. I am not talking about Muslims. I am not disrespecting Muslims for believing in whatever they want to believe. And I do not believe that the mere force of believing in an ideology or religion make you commit such murders no matter how violent those values you believe in are. There has to be another organisation that



takes these values, religion, and ideas and puts them into force and creates a sophisticated machinery of suppression. That is why I am saying it is a political fight.

We have to look more deeply and question the arguments that try to portray these serial killings as results of mere religious belief. In fact there is a political force that transforms these religious beliefs into such a force of suppression, terror, maiming, discrimination, and torture at the end of the 20th century, a force capable of intimidating the whole world. It is not a mere belief in Islam. There is a political movement and organisation behind it all. A mafia like organisation based on Islam, getting its ideas from Islam. It is a reactionary political movement that tries to gain power, share power in the region and also globally. It is a modern, contemporary concept and movement, based on ancient, antiquated ideas and ideology. It has moved globally now.

When it was nurtured with the help of the USA and the Western governments in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union and in Iran by importing Khomeini and Islamic Republic into the country, at the time of 1979 Revolution, it worked in the region. However, now, it has assumed international significance. This organisation or industry is now fighting for power globally and September 11 was one of those tragic events that demonstrated this global trend.

Violence against women is not an isolated action especially when you talk about 2 million world-wide every year. It is organised. They are not all done by political Islam but a great deal of them are committed, incited, encouraged or supported by political Islam. I am talking about this orchestrated global religious machinery. I think this is important and we should talk about it. We have to talk about other political and religious movements as well. There

are misogynous, sexist, chauvinist ideas that can create this situation against women. When you talk about male chauvinism as an ideology, we are told that we can fight them by education and cultural transformation. Of course we need education and cultural transformation. But how are we going to do it? Are we going to just get those people and talk with them? Educate them and tell them it is bad to kill other people? Or are we going to the base and root of the problem? How is that these ideologies and values, male chauvinism, anti women values are maintained regardless of the entire struggle carried out against them over centuries? How is it upheld? One needs to consider the role of the dominating values in the society carried out by states.

I have not got enough time to expand on the last point. Now I like to focus on political Islam as one of these main movements that creates and terrorises the world. It intimidates the world and

tries to silence any criticism of its movement or its ideas. Islam, where it can, where in power it kills, tortures, maims people and stones them to death. Where it can NOT do blatantly kill, where it does NOT have the power it becomes clever and sassy and it uses terms like “respect”, “tolerance”, “Islamophobia” and “cultural relativism”. So some very decent, freedom loving people, conscious people out of fear of being stamped as racists, do not dare to criticise them, do not dare to support the secularist. They look the other way, thinking if they criticise, if they stand against these values and actions, they might be racists, they have not respected other people’s culture or religion. The apologists of political Islam, the academia, the media, the Western governments come to their rescue. They ask for tolerance too. They demand respect for their outdated, backward, reactionary traditions, they demand respect for their culture. And they justify this with the help of concepts such as cultural relativism. These tactics are used to silence us. We are called racist, Islamophobic, intolerant, if we do not comply. Nonsense!



I like to bring your attention to the fact that it is not only genocide, murder and submission that we are witnessing. We are also witnessing resistance. The film we saw tonight called Submission. But it was not only about submission, it was also about resistance. The heroine was not submitted. She had not submitted to the act of god. She was trying to resist it and protect herself. I believe there is a resistance movement against this genocide, backward and male chauvinist ideology in the world. My time is up. In Iran there exists a very strong a vibrant resistance movement by women against gender apartheid, against the veil, against women’s subordination. This movement needs your support.

I believe it is not just a question of women mobilizing against this genocide. I am calling upon everyone, every decent, conscious, freedom loving human being to mobilize against this genocide, murder, violence, and chauvinism. Political Islam is mobilized

globally and internationally, we need to mobilize internationally as well. We need to fight against political Islam, for secularism, universality of women’s rights, and for women’s equality. This is one important way to stop violence committed against women. I don’t think we need to wait one century. We can’t afford it. We need to bring about the transformation NOW. I think we are able to do it now if we mobilize against it. So I call upon all of you to support our movement and to fight for these goals and values. We should unite and organise for a better and more humane world, to safeguard freedom and bring about equality. We need a world free from religious superstition and terrorism. We need to stand against two poles of terrorism, Islamic and state terrorism led by US and the Western governments. We have to organise to fight Oppression. Thank you

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Citizenship of Ayan Hirsi is revoked. We defend Ayan Hirsi. We protest against the Dutch government.

Ayan Hirsi Ali is a member of the Dutch Parliament. More importantly she is a fierce critic of Islam and supporter of women's rights. Last week Rita Verdonk, the Immigration Minister of Netherlands threatened to strip Hirsi of her Dutch citizenship for falsifying her name and date of birth on an asylum application when she arrived in 1992, fearing reprisals from her family after she fled an arranged marriage. She was granted a passport in 1997 and acknowledged the falsification in 2002 during vetting as a candidate for parliament. There were no objections then.

When the European governments instead of confronting Islamic movement and political Islam take a step back, it is not surprising that the Dutch Immigration Minister allows herself to revoke the citizenship of one of the activists of women's rights. Ayan Hirsi has been threatened to death by Islamic groups. As though this threat has not been enough, now the Dutch minister is holding another threat on Hirsi's head. What is her reason? Falsified name? This is just an empty and inhumane excuse.

The truth is somewhere else. At a time when the ruling right wing Party in Netherlands was using Ayan for its own right wing policies, there was no mention of falsification. However, now, when Ayan is appearing in international conferences defending women's progressive rights things are different. By intensifying the reactionary policy of cultural relativism, the European governments not only strengthened the Islamists, they also showed the green light for other religious right wing and racist



currents to attack human rights even further. These governments have long been the cause of strengthening of religious and racist currents. The decision of the Dutch Immigration Ministry is an attack on refugees and gives service to the criminal political Islam.

The question is not the geography of where Ayan can live. She is a well known figure and can emigrate to any country. It shows the tip of the ice berg of the policy adopted by the European

governments to attack refugees. It serves Islamic terrorism. We must not allow them to use such actions and excuses to curb refugee rights and their citizenship. The Dutch government's decision should be revoked.

We urge all women's organizations, refugee organizations and all secularists to stand against this decision. We shout aloud, No one is illegal!

Organisation for Women's Liberation

[Sign the on line petition](http://www.nosharia.com/Petition%20to%20Support%20Ayaan%20Hirsi%20Ali.htm)

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A political campaign is needed to end honor killing

Speech of Homa Arjomand on International Women's Day

“Never Forget Hatun! Campaign against Honour Killing” March 8th 2006

Happy International Women's Day, The International Campaign against Sharia Court in Canada in conjunction with the Committee against Stoning and Women's Liberation are hosting this conference in order to announce a political campaign entitled “Never Forget Hatun!” .

No doubt all of you are aware of crimes that occur under the name of Honor Killing in Europe and North America and I am sure you are all aware of its daily expansion in the West.

In today's speech I would like to talk about the importance of having a political campaign that promotes a political solution and motivates all social activists and concerned global citizens to join forces to end these medieval crimes. I have no doubt that Honor killing has been analyzed from various angles and the route of this cruel act has become the subject of various conferences, forums and, panel discussions. We are all aware of resolutions and possible solutions that have been put forward by all. No one denies the serious measures which have been adopted in some countries in order to save the possible victims of honor killing. We are all aware that governmental and NGO's have put forth an effort to build shelters, outreach programs and even hot lines. We also know that a tougher criminal code has been added to the code of criminal act in some countries for the accusers, but the reality proves that all these precautions are not enough. This conference with its remarkable attendance such as you proves that we need to do more serious actions to end honor killing. In here I am not talking about the Islamic states or

countries where backward culture and tradition has been promoted and guarded by religious movements. In these countries the cruel punishment for women for not being obedient, have a prolonged history and have in fact become part of legislation. I am talking about Europe, North America and Scandinavia where honor killing has been escalated and it is indeed a new phenomenon not older than two decades. Its birth came about from the time religious groups, in particular political Islam, were given rooms to raise heads. It was only then that Heshu in England at the age of 16, Fadima in Sweden and Hautoon in Germany with many more women and young girls were all murdered for not honoring the inhuman tradition.

In Canada we are not witnessing honor killing much, simply because in Canada women and young girls who are not submissive are taken to their home countries such as India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria and there they are being murdered by the male member of the family or a hit man. And the state is not obligated to protect the individual citizens who were forced to leave Canada by the head of family; be it by the father or other male member of the family. There have been several reports in this regard and documentary films.

In here I am not going to put stress on the tie that honor killing has, with growth of anti-women culture and religious movement, in particular Islamic movements as other speakers have already touched base on or will do so. Needless to say the more we give in for the backward culture and tradition, the more women will be subjected to violence and brutal slaughter for refusing to obey the

traditions of their culture.

I only want to emphasize on one point and that is to say, honor killing is a punishment for the women who act not according to the religion, tradition and culture imposed on them.

To be more precise it is a punishment for the ones who desire to run their own lifestyle and choose their own partner. The victims are women and young girls who have thirst to be free and they are not willing to compromise for less than modern and humane life style. Honor killing can only be compared with the witch burning that took place during the European Medieval period and it should be seen as comparably disgraceful.

Keep in mind that the victims of honor killing were at the forefront of the struggle for a well deserved human life. We should not allow these symbols of resistance to vanish before our eyes. What can we do in order to end honor killing?

Among many implications one can highlight a sever punishment for the ones who are involved in this cruel and inhumane crime. And we should indeed do so. We can and we should emphasize on integration and the concept of the equal and universal rights of all citizens. This would prevent violence against women and children in ghettos run by restrictive and backward cultural and customs. We can and we should also make sure that religion stays out of state and education systems or put bans on religious symbols in schools and workplaces in order to prevent religion influence on the children. We should indeed implement harsh punishments for the ones who violate children's rights from enjoying their civil and social rights. We can and we should spend millions of dollars on public education in regard to honor killing. We can and we should open shelters with expert social workers and 24 hour hot lines in order to help and protect the potential victims. We could even issue the possible victims new different birth

certificates and identifications as well as relocating them to safer areas. But without a political campaign this medieval crime will reproduce itself and will hunt 1000's more. To prove my point I need



to expand on a few facts. The Western states can not put into place harsh punishments for the accused of Honor killing while financing religious activities, institutions and provide them with material and moral support. This is happening on regular bases.

As one can see from reading a recent press news published in Canada the, Government of Canada gives \$30 million to His Highness the Aga Khan to promote pluralism in Canada and abroad or when last week the Canadian Supreme Court validated seek religion by lifting the ban on Seek boys carrying daggers to schools. We don't have to go too far to see these contradictions, just take a look at the conservative government in the province of Ontario. The same province that last month, after almost twenty-two months of strggle, managed to pursue its premier to put an end to Sharia court and all other Faith Based arbitration but is now trying to find ways to fund Islamic schools. How can a government that promotes the religions expect its followers not to put their faith above the law and individual civil rights? This is not only happening in Canada. In England,

“Tony Blair announced on August 7th 2005 that an estimated 120 to 150 independent Muslim schools will be offered “voluntary aided” status in line

with almost 7000 Catholic, Church of England and Jewish schools”

65 million dollars are given to Islamic groups in Nigeria to endorse Sharia law and regulation in such a way that lightens

its oppression against women. Validation of religion has gone so far that freedom of expression, that was fought for, for the past 100 years, is now being phased out. Just pay attention to the actions of the Western governments towards caricatures of Mohammad in the press who one by one raced to apologize and condemn the artists. Just recently the United Nations and the

European Union have proposed to put into place a system to limit people's freedom of expression when it comes to the criticizing of a religion. As we can see all of the parties in power in the west are flirting with religious groups and then expecting that the violence against women to stop. It is a joke to wish for an environment free of violence for women while endorsing, funding, validating, promoting the religions that are responsible for such violent actions. Obviously states cannot talk about integration while promoting and funding backwards, anti-woman, cultures and religions that segregate women from main stream society. This is why I strongly believe that a political campaign is needed to see, to evaluate and to put forward political solutions to make sure that the governments exclude religion from state and all its laws, To make sure that no financial or moral support is given to religions or any religious activities, to make sure that the governments stay secular. Only then honor killing and all other types of abuse against women will be demolished.

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Our aims

Women's freedom is the measure of freedom in society. There is still a great deal left to accomplish in order to eliminate inequality between men and women, not only in Iran where misogyny brutally rules, but in the most advanced societies as well. The Organisation for Women's Liberation (OWL) sees itself as part of the immense historical and international struggle for women's liberation.

The OWL's aim is the unconditional liberation of women and complete equality between women and men in Iran. The OWL, therefore, must fight for the following demands:

- 1- *Complete equal rights for women and men; abolition of discriminatory laws, particularly laws in relation to family, marriage, divorce, and parental responsibility, for children;*
- 2- *Abolition of compulsory veiling and freedom of dress;*
- 3- *Complete abolition of segregation;*
- 4- *Access to equal resources in education, employment, sports and cultural activities;*
- 5- *Separation of religion from the state and education.*

Women in Iran

Women are banned from a wide range of social, economic and political activities; Islamic veil is compulsory. Women are separated from men in buses, universities, and many public places. Husbands and fathers are their guardians, at home and outside. Women cannot travel, even within the country, without permission from their male guardians. They have no right to divorce, or custody of their children. The list is endless.

We can change this. The Organisation for Women's Liberation-Iran is the organisation with the vision and dedication to make a difference in the life of millions of women in Iran. Progression in Iran will mean progression in the region.

Join us, make donation, distribute our paper, contact us. Together we can make a difference.

Related links:

Medusa, Journal of Women and Socialism
www.medusa2000.com
International Committee against Stoning
www.stopstoningnow.com
International Campaign to End Sharia Court in Canada
www.nosharia.com
International Campaign in Defense of Women's Rights in Iran
www.irandwr.org

The Organisation for Women's Liberation-Iran

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