



MENAFem Statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

The world is currently witnessing the highest rate of conflicts recorded since 1946, as the Global South is experiencing a frightening escalation in the outbreak of wars, conflicts, and disputes—resulting in countless victims, most of whom are women. According to a United Nations report, about 676 million women and girls live near deadly conflict zones, the highest number since the 1990s. Conflict-related sexual violence has also increased by 87 percent in just two years, while civilian casualties among women and children have quadrupled over the past two years—bearing in mind that these figures are often higher in reality.

These reports and statistics confirm that the world continues to violate women's bodies and rights, using them as a tool to ignite and intensify wars. Despite this, peace negotiation tables rarely witness the presence of women. In 2024 for instance, 9 out of 10 peace processes around the world were made up of only male negotiators. Women made up no more than 7 percent of negotiators and 14 percent of mediators—despite the passage of 25 years since the UN Security Council issued the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, which claims to seek improved representation of women in peace processes and to recognize them as active and decisive agents in achieving peace.

In addition, funding for local women's organizations is being restricted despite their significant role in mitigating the effects of crises. According to the UN Secretary-General in the Security Council, nearly 90 percent of women-led local groups in conflict zones reported suffering from financial distress for months and being on the verge of closure.

The increase in conflicts, rise in the capital of war, and the acceleration of weapons production do not simply result in human losses that can be reduced to tables of numbers listing the wounded, the killed, the disabled, the missing, hostages, and prisoners. They also extend to contribute to the destruction of the planet and alter the climate. Every declared war is, by necessity, an environmental and climate war, and what Israel is doing offers clear proof of that.



According to international reports, the genocide in Gaza caused extensive damage, hitting water and sanitation infrastructure and essential agricultural systems, including irrigation networks and storage units. Due to Israeli bombardment, recovery may take several years, with significant consequences for future agricultural production. The destruction of vegetation cover and soil compaction caused by airstrikes and tank movements has increased land degradation and the risks of desertification.

The environmental damage of this war has also reached Lebanon. During the fighting between the two countries, Israeli shelling—through the use of white phosphorus—caused multiple fires, destroying crops, natural areas, and infrastructure, especially along the southern border. Chemical bombs destroyed ecosystems and contaminated water sources and soil, with effects expected to last for decades.

These war-related damages have surpassed the local level to become a form of global climate extermination, as described by many climate experts who warn that the climate impact of this war will persist for decades. According to a study published by The Guardian, the carbon footprint produced by the Israeli assault on Gaza in the first 15 months surpassed 31 million tons of CO₂ equivalent—a quantity equal to or exceeding the annual emissions of more than 100 countries.

The study shows that Israel is responsible for 99% of war-related climate emissions between 2023 and 2025, with 30% of those emissions coming from U.S. shipments of weapons and military supplies to Israel, which exceeded 50,000 tons, transported by large aircraft and ships with extremely high carbon footprints. Another 20% resulted from airstrikes, tanks, surveillance aircraft, and weapons factories.

Climate change is not disconnected from women's issues. In fact, we cannot confront these changes or find solutions without recognizing their deep effects on women's health and sexual and reproductive rights. Rising temperatures and natural disasters—such as floods, droughts, and extreme heat waves—significantly increase women's health risks and often prevent them from accessing essential services.



Since women make up the largest share of workers in the agricultural sector, the deterioration of agriculture and the decline in food security caused by droughts and floods directly and disproportionately affect them. Moreover, harsh climate conditions push women in many countries to migrate, exposing them to numerous economic and social risks due to weak economic and social empowerment, which also limits their participation in decision-making.

During the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, MENAFem, as a movement concerned with feminist economics and ecological justice in the Global South, seeks to emphasize that climate issues are an essential part of understanding the systemic violence against women. It also aims to shed light on economic violence, which is often ignored despite being no less dangerous than sexual or physical violence, and is reflected in the impact of austerity policies on working women and housewives, who act as household managers and unpaid producers.

The movement also seeks to highlight the extent of harm inflicted on women by neoliberal policies that reinforce dependency within the agriculture and food sectors—policies that affect not only the depletion of resources but also women in particular, as they constitute the largest proportion of agricultural workers and are responsible for securing water and ensuring household food security.