

Women living under muslim laws
النساء في ظل قوانين المسلمين
Femmes sous lois musulmanes

WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS ARE UNIVERSAL

WOMEN LIVING UNDER MUSLIM LAWS

International Solidarity Network

New York, 4 March 2008

**STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE 60TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

NO HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT UNIVERSAL RIGHTS
Message of the international solidarity network Women Living Under Muslim
Laws /
Femmes sous lois musulmanes (WLUML)

The international solidarity network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws is proud to join the women, men and the other institutions for freedom and equality, coming together here and elsewhere, to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Adopted following the chaos of the Second World War, this declaration represented for million people in the world, a fundamental recognition of their rights and freedoms. It forecast for other peoples a hope of freedom which they had first to win or regain by force of arms. This fundamental gain had left on the margins a great part of humanity, because of their sex, class, race, identity, country and diverse regions. Through struggle, women, like other categories of peoples, had to gain a place of speech and movement to express their own needs and requirements.

These diverse spaces of speech and movement in the world, spaces which the Women Living Under Muslim Laws network is honoured be part of, were multiform places from which women clarified their positions and reinforced their demands. These demands, denouncing the inequalities and discrimination which women endure in the world, are based on the principles the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is on these fundamental bases that women pressured, and continue to put pressure on their societies and the international community so that the Rights of Man become truly human rights, applicable to all, including women. Which woman could refuse to adhere to the following:

First, article one of the Declaration that: "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." And, the two points of article 16 which stipulate that men and women shall "have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution," and, that "marriage can be concluded only with the free and full consent of the future spouses." And article 25, that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control.

Not without difficulty, women had to extend these principles to their own realities, through several conventions, like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and other pacts and treaties negotiated, adopted and ratified by many States since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Everywhere women's movements mobilized to claim universal, national and universal rights. The Additional Protocol to the African Charter of the Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women, adopted in Maputo (Mozambique), in 2004, was a decisive stage in this process for African women.

If it is important to reconsider the universal, starting from the local in order to nourish its realities, claims and strategies, it is quite as important to bring the local to the level of this enriched universal so that all the women in the world enjoy the same rights,

whatever their origin, their culture or their standard of living and that universal rights are no longer reserved for privileged categories of people. Because it is in the name of history, culture, and religious specificities, that restrictions and opposition to freedoms and rights are made!

The Women Living Under Muslim Laws network believes it is necessary at this 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration Human Rights, to remember that there is civil and political discrimination in the name of the culture and religion, which are sources of the loss of liberty and of serious physical and moral violence in the world. These are committed not only through the actions of extremist fundamentalist movements, but also through rampant and daily local and family fundamentalisms claiming moral authority, which is quite as offensive.

Thus, like all those present here, the international solidarity network Women Living Under Muslim Laws adheres to the fundamental principles registered in this Declaration and requires that they be the minimal basic principles in all national and international human relations. Women Living Under Muslim Laws invites all women to join to the demonstrations of support and solidarity in the name of their human rights in the world.