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**INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND THE GENDER
PERSPECTIVE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Written statement* submitted by Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-
governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[31 January 2005]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

With the growth of crises and insecurity due to globalism, conflicts, militarism, and extremism that are originated by men, women across the world – particularly Asia-Pacific – are faced with further and more complex problems than before.

The globalisation process has created conditions by which the problems of women in Iran cannot be excluded from women's problems globally. Although due to the created circumstances particularly with US militarist pressures in neighbouring countries and also the damages caused by religious fundamentalism, a more serious attention to women's situation in Iran is required.

The most serious obstacle in the way of the realisation of women's rights in African and Asian countries, Iran in particular, is the cultural obstacle, which is due to the global patriarchal culture that is in the name of traditions and customs. And in most cases this patriarchy is given a religious label.

Lack of social security, honour and dowry killings, genital mutilation, immolation and suicide, trafficking, forced prostitution and marriage and pregnancies, conditions during and after armed conflicts, sex change, refugees and asylum-seekers, are all areas in which full political commitments for the purpose of legal protection and the provision of gender-based needs for women are not established. All governments, Iran in particular, should pay particular attention to the going concerns to be able to resolve them with a global commitment and will.

Due to international and national inattention in the setting of applicable gender-based laws, policies and mechanisms to prevent abuse against women, we witness the lack of sources of income for women and an increase in their vulnerability and the wheels of economy's disregard of women. As a result the world has reached a stage where poverty has taken a feminine nature. Not only the inequality in land ownership, credit and in general the feminisation of poverty, have not been resolved for women, but the stance against them has met general silence.

Instead of being influential and playing central role in economic decision-makings, women are unofficially active and are present as an invisible workforce, and do not get much legal protection. Lack of enough women's presence in the sphere of power and political and social participation, and the lack of equal opportunities in top management levels, and their inaccessibility to wealth, status, technology and information on one hand, and patriarchal, conservative, and fundamentalist attitudes on the other, have all created gender inequalities for women in political and social areas.

Most family, criminal and civil laws and codes in Islamic countries, Iran in particular are based on Islamic Laws. Today there are several interpretations and viewpoints among the Iranian Muslim clerics concerning these laws, and some say that reforms and amendments should be made with the evolution of mankind. In the application of some laws such as Khoonbaha (blood money) and Ghesas (retaliation) not only no equality is seen between men and women, but they are in complete conflict with human rights.

To protect, support and promote women's rights, the violation of their fundamental rights and freedoms must be stopped. The promotion of civil, political, social and cultural rights of women is one of the important basis of fighting patriarchal culture, and to remove obstacles in the way of women's advancement in the country.

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) believes that the lack of necessary guarantees within the law for the realisation of women's rights, and the failure in the promotion and support of women's rights by not joining the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDWA), and also expressing serious concern over the omission by the Islamic Parliament of the term

“establishment of gender justice” from the government’s National Fourth Development Plan draft legislation, can all seriously be threats to the realisation, promotion and enablement of women in society.

As one of the most vulnerable sections of society during armed conflict and the homelessness that ensue the conflict, and the eventual repatriation, women need international support.

Regional conflicts over the last two decades have left over a million Iraqi and Afghan women and children homeless, who have taken refuge in Iran. The uncertainty of over one hundred thousand Iranian women that have married Afghan or Iraqi men and have mixed-marriage children, must be added to the existing concerns.

The high mortality rate of mothers, the refusal of approval of abortion by some governments, youths inaccessibility to hygiene and gender rights, HIV/AIDS, are all signs of inequality to women’s access to quality services. The resolve of these problems requires a national and global resolve. The existing achievements have been limited so far, and despite the stresses that have been made in international conferences and conventions, this resolve has not been realised on the global level, and women’s health rights have been subjected to economic and political conditions, and the negative effects of patriarchal, prejudicial attitudes are still strife and visible.

Women’s inaccessibility to information sources and the media has caused a deep digital rift for them in society. This is visible in the form of filtering or proxy on women related websites, where they are denied access to information.

The reflection of clichéd gender roles within the written text media, have also resulted in women’s participation and presence to be limited, due often to patriarchal culture.

Thus women have become more like tools, who make their appearances in the media to the way men like them to. Their role is not determined for their worth and requirements but it’s based on patriarchal views and exploitation.

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence confirms the efforts of government and the UN in the realisation of women’ rights, and strongly urges all to take effective action for the preservation of achievements, provision of commitments.

As a human rights NGO, the ODVV endeavours to work towards bringing closer together national, regional and international initiatives and experiences.
