

Statement – 22 March 2020 – <http://nazra.org/en/node/688>

## **Action Plan | How Egypt's Women Can Survive Amid the Corona Pandemic**

The 11th of March 2020 marks a turning point for the world and humanity, as the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the COVID-19 virus as a global pandemic. All humans now need to survive together and hold on to responsibility, collectiveness and solidarity in the face of a disease that threatens thousands each day. Between a treatment that has not been discovered yet and health systems that cannot stand against the spreading rates of the virus in most of the countries, and confusion of most of the world's political leaderships in the face of all these demands and consequences.

Egypt has entered the danger zone with the second case of the virus early this month. The Egyptian government took several wise actions and procedures –albeit a little delayed– in its efforts to contain the crisis and slow down the virus spread rates. With all our solidarity to everyone's attempts and efforts to avoid a catastrophic turn of events amid all the tension and fear for our lives and those around us, we also express our deep concern regarding Egyptian women's situation. Women face this crisis as a part of a society that deepens patriarchy, repression, discrimination and violence against them for a long time. Women now face all these dangers and the consequences of the virus spread from a fragile position and in much need for special protection procedures. At this time, many may not pay attention to the priority of women's conditions despite the multiplied social, psychological and economic burdens over them.

As feminists, we always believe in solidarity and promoting societal responsibility, participatory action and collective efforts and expertise needed to survive this crisis, and we also believe in the importance of

previous experiences at such times which tell us that societies survive with women's efforts and their effective roles. We see that currently it is our responsibility to focus on the conditions of Egyptian women from all society segments and their needs. And to propose a number of solutions and urgent measures based on revisiting many experiences that contribute to improving their conditions and protecting them at such difficult times.

We join feminist movements from across the globe that work hard to avoid becoming societies that are more unjust and discriminatory against women, and so that all the previous efforts which have been made over the history to protect and empower women do not go in vein. And so that we don't witness the day when women are excluded from survival and justice values, or the day they are told that the necessity of protecting them from violence and discrimination is not a priority.

Thus, Nazra will publish a number of policy papers, proposals and visual designs during the upcoming period to highlight the conditions of Egyptian women and the procedures and urgent measures needed for their protection and safety.