



Press Release – 10 December 2019 – <http://nazra.org/en/node/670>

Closing Statement of “A Shuttered Public Sphere” Campaign

Today, Nazra for Feminist Studies concludes its “A Shuttered Public Sphere” campaign, within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism to Combat Violence against Women international campaign, which started on 25 November and ends today, 10 December. Nazra dedicated the campaign to all women who struggled throughout Egypt’s history against discrimination, violence and oppression. Especially, the women and girls of January 25 Revolution, the Egyptian feminist movement that is marked by a history of struggles and sacrifices for defending women’s rights. In particular, Nazra dedicated the campaign to women human rights defenders who are detained in the Egyptian prisons; feminist activist Asmaa Dabees, journalist Esraa Abdel Fattah, lawyer Mahienour Al Masry, and journalist and WHRD Solafa Magdy, who right after the launch of the campaign, has been detained.

“A Shuttered Public Sphere” campaign focused on the current situation of the public sphere which was closed to women’s participation as a result of the continuous and escalated violence against women, women human rights defenders and feminist organizations. These violations were manifested in wide arrests targeting women protesters and activists, and abductions and detention of WHRDs, in addition to defamation and incitement against WHRDs, activists and feminist organizations.

The campaign engaged with the national strategies and how serious the State carried its responsibilities of protecting and empowering women against the increasing rate of violations and targeting women, WHRDs and feminist organizations. It published a research paper titled “Two Years After Launching the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Women 2030..Women’s issues between unmet promises and a Shuttered Public Sphere”, and a policy paper titled “One Year Before the Expiration of the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women..Gains and Shortcomings”.

The campaign also shed light on women’s political empowerment and raised a question on realizing the constitutional rights or the State’s promises to women amid policies constraining the public sphere. It published a number of infographics titled “Women’s Participation in Politics and Decision-Making”. Moreover, it presented some facts on violations against women and WHRDs

on the basis of their opinions, the continuous targeting of feminist organizations, testimonies of WHRDs describing their feelings towards the closed public sphere, and through a number of visuals and infographics.

On the International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, 29 November, the campaign paid respect and tribute to the WHRDs in Egypt, the Middle East and North Africa and across the world. It also published profiles of WHRDs: Feminist Activist Asmaa Dabees, Journalist Esraa Abdel Fattah, Lawyer Mahienour Al Masry and Journalist Solafa Magdy, all detained in the Egyptian prisons because of their struggle from different positions as WHRDs.

Finally, the campaign launched a tweeting day through which it published a number of tweets on the violations Egyptian WHRDs face, as part of “She Defends” campaign, launched by the Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders in the Middle East and North Africa.

Today, 10 December, at the closure of the campaign, which is the International Human Rights Day, Nazra pays respects to the WHRDs; Feminist Activist Asmaa Dabees, Journalist Esraa Abdel Fattah, Lawyer Mahienour Al Masry and Journalist Solafa Magdy, and it calls the Egyptian authorities to immediately release them all. Nazra also raises the question around the State’s responsibility towards women’s right of protection from violence in the public and private spheres, and their right to enjoy a safe public sphere and political and public participation, and freely express their opinions and thoughts. Also, the State’s responsibility to guarantee and promote the legibility of defending women’s rights amid the threats, violence, targeting of women, WHRDs and feminist organizations as presented by the campaign, and how these violations embrace the patriarchal frameworks and values in both private and public spheres, which denies women their basic rights and incites for more violence and discrimination against them.