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# **The Relationship between Feminism and State Policies for the Elimination of Violence against Women:**

## **The National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence against Women as an Example**

### ***Introduction***

The issue of Violence against Women in the public sphere has been a major source of concern over the past few years, especially in the four years following the January 25th Revolution in 2011. Discussion of what Women have to endure in the public sphere became commonplace on many platforms, including the media and social networking sites. It has also become a leading item on the agendas of many feminist organizations and various groups which seek to confront the exacerbating and increasingly frequent phenomenon.

In this context, many feminist groups expressed the need for ensuring that perpetrators of mob-sexual assaults and gang rapes are held accountable and adequately punished, addressing the deeper elements of the issue with a comprehensive long-term scheme with a view to its elimination, and the adoption of national policies to combat the exacerbating phenomenon; as an expression of the State's responsibility towards its female citizens.

The Egyptian Government has adopted certain measures such as creating a Unit on Monitoring Crimes of Violence against Women in May 2013, establishing departments for combating Violence against Women at security directorates, followed by the launch of the National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence against Women (NSVAW), drafted by the National Council for Women and published on May 7, 2015. NSVAW is a five-year strategy (2015-2020) which aims to coordinate the efforts of several Ministries, National Councils and Special State Authorities to raise awareness and provide support for survivors of such crimes.

It should be noted at the outset that, although there are some gaps in NSVAW, it generally addresses many factors and details related to the societal context of Violence against Women in both the private and public spheres. NSVAW also presents a theoretical perspective and some practical procedures. This shows the Egyptian Government's vision for implementation, which is focused on a protocol for cooperation and coordination among 12 different Ministries and government authorities during the period 2015-2020. However, the gaps and observations addressed in this paper relate to the general orientation of the strategies and legislative measures adopted by the State, particularly with regard to the fact that they fail to take the feminist perspective into consideration, as a result of the failure to

involve feminist groups capable of providing a feminist discourse which addresses gender issues and strategies.

It is noteworthy that the term "feminist discourse" does not imply a rigid discourse offering one homogenized view. On the contrary, this discourse includes many schools and orientations, involving many mechanisms and approaches for dealing with various social, economic and political issues. However, our analysis of the NSVAW shows a failure to incorporate any such feminist approaches.

This paper aims to ask the question about how different NSVAW, as a strategy for dealing with an issue that is inherently concerned with Women, i.e. Violence against Women both in the private and public spheres, would be if it were to incorporate a gender-perspective and a feminist discourse in terms of its objective, tools, and implementation policies.

### **The Meaning and Significance of a Feminist Discourse**

Feminist movements from different schools adopt feminist ideas, methodologies and discourses in addressing many societal, political and economic issues and problems. They aim to get to the root of the patriarchal structure for dealing with societal conditions, in general, which leads to discrimination against Women, in particular. They analyze the apparent flaw in the assessment of life issues which usually fails to take into consideration a gender perspective, which means that the human identity and entity are formed socially and influenced by what is determined by social perceptions of male or female effects and roles. In addition thereto, feminist discourse aims to challenge and attempts to break down many analytical patterns for several issues which ignore the factor of social power relations and the hegemony of patriarchal and masculine practices which enhance discrimination against Women. These patterns usually overlook the importance of analyzing the effects of these social powers on issues relating to Women in the first place, the most important of which is the issue of Violence against Women.

Placing an emphasis on adopting a gender perspective restores the balance in societal power relations and highlights the effects of patriarchal practices and ideas that directly rob Women of agency. This analytical approach regarding these practices or ideas contributes to an in depth look at the impact of power relations on the political, societal and economic status of Women as it is not restricted to a developmental or rights perspective only.

Hence the importance of adopting a feminist discourse and ideology in all policies and strategies in order to deal with the imbalance suffered by Women in society at all levels, while dealing with all factors leading to discrimination against Women in both the private and public spheres. This should result in the comprehensive adoption of the current issue and the societal factors issue affecting it from Women's point of view, while introducing policies and practices aiming to comprehensively and widely map the imbalance in societal and power relations and attempting to propose alternative scenarios for the treatment of this imbalance.

## **Feminism in Government**

The paper aims to show the experiences of feminism as adopted by some governments. The current Swedish government adopted a feminist discourse and declared itself a "feminist government" in its policies relating to Women, their status and their rights, especially with regard to violence. That example shows that the Swedish State and its government have adopted an overriding principle in their policies, which is to ensure that everyone enjoys the right to work and support themselves, and to achieve a balance between professional and family life, and to live without fear of mistreatment or violence. This comes as a result of the adoption of Sweden and its government of a system focusing on the inclusion of a gender perspective, which was proposed by the United Nations in 1997, and which serves to introduce the concept of gender equality in the operation of governmental entities at all levels. The idea of gender equality is not an individual or isolated issue but an ongoing and necessary process for the realisation of equality which must be taken into account when making decisions and taking measures and procedures necessary for the creation of mechanisms and practices designed to familiarise different societies with the idea of equality. Among those measures taken by the Swedish government with regard to the issue of Violence against Women is providing 130 shelters where Women can receive medical and psychological support necessary for their rehabilitation after their exposure to violence. Such measures showcase that governments recognize the basis of the problem of gender-based violence.

As indicated above, adopting a feminist discourse in government policies does not necessarily mean adopting policies toward each issue individually in isolation, rather, such an approach incorporates all discriminatory issues and practices against Women. In this case the aim is to eliminate them through a comprehensive overview of all areas and their impact on Women's lives, be it political, economic or societal and in terms of the access to opportunities. Such mechanisms are adopted in an attempt to comprehensively restore the balance in power relations between Women and men, given that all discriminatory practices affecting Women are linked and directly affect the extent to which crimes of violence occur against Women. We find that one of the basic pillars of Sweden's feminist policies starts from the educational stages in schools at an early age, where the principle of gender equality is introduced into curricula to inculcate awareness among girls and boys of the principle of equal opportunities and equality, which qualify them for later stages of education. There is also a Complaints Office dedicated to equality where issues relating to discrimination are handled. Its purpose is maintaining opportunities and equal rights for everyone in work and study places, in addition to other places and fields. It also ensures the application of the law on maternity and paternity leave in a way that does not affect the status of the parents' jobs. It should be noted that maternity and paternity leave for parents in Sweden can reach up to 480 days and can be taken per unit of a month or a week or a day or even hours, and as a result we find that 24% of parents in Sweden take such leave.

With regard to government policies, there is a special Ministry of Gender Equality since 2013, which is run by a female Minister. The goal of this Ministry is to ensure the inclusion of the gender perspective in all ministries of the Swedish government as well as the adoption of policies based on that. It should also be noted that 13 out of a total 24 ministries are run by

Women (female ministers), and in the political life, 45% of parliament is composed of Women, which is one of the highest rates of female participation compared to the rest of Scandinavian countries (which are located north to continental Europe, and include Denmark, Sweden and Norway), where this rate ranges between 35% and 45%. Through the adoption of the gender mainstreaming perspective by the Swedish Government, equality of opportunities and their availability for Women and men are emphasised both in business and politics. This practice also confirms that any discriminatory practices against Women are punishable by law and addressed immediately through extensive investigations of any acts of discrimination. The aim thereof is to provide a climate and factors that give both Women and men equal representation, resources, strengths and opportunities.

However, feminist criticism differs with regard to the policies referred to above, as some feminists believe that despite the success of the Scandinavian model, one must take into account, for example, with regard to political participation, that Women's representation is important, but it is important to keep in mind the cultural and societal differences among Women. Despite their unity while challenging patriarchal domination in general and which may result in attention for and encouragement of female-friendly legislation, this could also create differences among themselves regarding those same policies which they put forward, because they reflect their different cultural and political identities.

### **The National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence against Women In Egypt (NSVAW): A Preliminary Reading**

The initial assessment of the national strategy for combating Violence against Women, which was published a few months ago, shows the following issues:

I. The problem relating to the language used to define crimes of violence where inappropriate terminology is employed showcasing shortcomings in the characterisation and understanding of the various crimes of violence and their root causes.

II. The problem of the procedures and measures for accountability where there is one exception where perpetrators of such crimes were held accountable which is [the case of mob-sexual assaults and gang rapes in Tahrir square on 8 June 2014](#) which is the day of the inauguration of President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi. In addition to the life imprisonment verdict for the police officer who sexually assaulted a mentally challenged minor detained in Imbaba police station in May 2015<sup>1</sup>.

III. The problem of using special entities in the State to apply those procedures and measures whereby these same entities adopt a hostile discourse towards Women. Furthermore, there are challenges hindering these entities from applying the concerned strategy and no solutions or procedures are proposed to address those challenges.

Finally, there is no clear mechanism for evaluating and monitoring the implementation of that strategy, which raises an important question about the feasibility thereof over the long

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<sup>1</sup> Life imprisonment for Police officer who raped mentally handicapped girl in Imbaba police station:  
<http://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/736716>

term, and its success in addressing the issue of Violence against Women and the extent to which it is able to achieve real results in reducing such crimes.

## **Problems related to NSVAW**

Foreword: the Prime Minister's Foreword to the concerned strategy is filled with many problems referred to above. The rise of Violence against Women was interpreted as a result of recent economic, social and political conditions. This entails a total disregard of the cases of violence committed against Women, whether in the private or public sphere, which has been documented since many years.

The first chapter: the strategy's first chapter shows a big problem, namely the absence of civil society organizations from all the committees concerned with the development, implementation and evaluation of the strategy, which are represented in the supreme operation, implementation and coordination committees. Even if the strategy had been presented to representatives of civil society through a workshop to identify their vision about it and how to develop it, that is not considered sufficient.

The second chapter: Although the second chapter of the strategy entitled "types of Violence against Women and girls", contains detailed definitions of various types of Violence against Women and minors, it ignores other types and patterns. The definition of physical violence entails detailed examples derived from the Egyptian reality of acts committed by state actors and non-state actors but without reference to the fact that some were perpetrated by state actors. Additionally, the strategy does not address at all any mechanism of holding state actors accountable. This shows the patriarchal direction adopted by the strategy which fails to punish state actors. It also reconfirms the lack of equality in power and institutional relations represented by state actors compared to non-state actors. The definition of sexual violence includes each practice with a focus on a specific field, in addition to psychological and economic violence, but it does not include forced vaginal tests which are conducted on some Women who get arrested while entering prison.

Despite the fact that the definitions of the types of violence perpetrated against Women and girls vary considerably, they are marred by some idiomatic and ideological problems represented in the violation of sexual integrity rather than physical integrity. The term "indecent assault" is maintained and linked with "Women's modesty" which highlights an ethical side of the issue as well as the concept of honor, linking sexual exploitation "with rules religion and morality", thereby reinforcing the concept of honor and ignoring the reality that these are crimes of violence breaching the right to physical integrity of Women and minors. The definition of rape also remains limited, lacking and traditional and is described as sexual intercourse with a female, and fails to address rape with tools and fingers and oral and anal rape which occurred in documented incidents of violence. Elsewhere, the word "prostitution" is used in the section on human trafficking instead of the word "sex work". Furthermore, there is no mention of gang rapes or mob-sexual assaults, as well as no mention of [vaginal](#) or virginity tests. It was also necessary to make a clear distinction between violence in the public and private spheres, otherwise the impression is given that Violence against Women is viewed as a one bloc, ignoring the different contexts of the private and



public spheres, and between the responsibility of state and non-state actors based on the power relations and the authority used.

The third chapter: the third chapter entitled "legal framework: national and international" deals with international instruments and Egyptian legislation on Violence against Women. This chapter details all international conventions and instruments which Egypt has ratified them-such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) – while clarifying the reservation on articles 2, 16 and 28, based on articles 9, 11, 53, 59, 89 and 99 of the Egyptian constitution, in addition to the articles of the Egyptian Penal Code and its amendments (267, 268 and 269 bis, 288, 290, 296, 306 bis, 241 and 242) in addition to the amendment of article 306 in June 2015. But it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the strategy refers to the Egyptian legislator's effort to implement harsher punishment and to provide a clear definition of sexual harassment, without mentioning the crimes of rape or sexual assault, whether individual or mass.

The fourth chapter: the fourth chapter deals with national efforts regarding the issue of Violence against Women – governmental and non-governmental — by each of the National Council for Women, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Religious Endowments, the Ministry of Youth, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the State Information Service, private associations and civil society organizations. One of the most important of these efforts whereby pressure should be applied for the monitoring and dissemination of information in transparency is:

- Commencing a national study initiated by the National Council for Women and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics to produce statistics on cases of violence and the resulting economic cost thereof.
- The establishment of a "Psychological Counselling Chamber" by the Ministry of Justice, as recently created at the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood.
- Putting in place a protocol/medical guide by the Ministry of Health to deal with survivors of gender-based violence and circulating it at the national level in all hospitals and health facilities and training service providers to use it so as to cover all public hospitals in greater Cairo, Assiut and Sohag by the end of 2014 and the rest of the governorates in stages until the end of 2017. It is worth mentioning that the concerned strategy uses the term "victims" rather than "survivors", which implicitly denies the rehabilitation process of Women against whom these crimes were committed and the role of the State therein. It also robs those Women of the right to recognition for their courage in carrying out their lives normally despite the enormity of what they faced.
- Putting in place a reference to a number of 9 shelters intended to host abused Women at the level of the governorates, while indicating that the Ministry of Social Solidarity proposed the establishment of 2 centers for abused Women in 3 governorates as well as the development of 6 centers in terms of equipment and wages, however, this number is insufficient to cover the governorates of the Republic or to meet the needs of abused Women for such reception centres; and is

a very small number compared to the prevalence of such crimes, and the large geographical size of the country and its population. It also does not address the locations of these centers or how to review their regulations, particularly as a five-year period was dedicated for the implementation of this project. Nor has a mechanism been designed for the effective supervision of their employees and for enacting amendments to their internal regulations.

- Printing a number of books that address Violence against Women by the Ministry of Religious Endowments intended for imams such as "the position of Women in Islam and their right to education" and "Women between the paganism and Islam", however, there is no similar mechanism for adherents of other religions where promoting the concept of religious and moral scruples and ignoring their relationship with patriarchal values in Egyptian society helps build a conservative patriarchal discourse which condemns Women and does not accept religious discourse based on feminist discourse. For example, Dr. Ali Gomaa, the previous mufti of the Republic was a guest in a television program called "God knows" on the channel "CBC" in August 2015, where he stated that looking at "uncovered" Women does not constitute a sin for men, since Women "waived such licence, and looking at them became admissible"<sup>2</sup>. This entails a clear patriarchal perception of Women and their bodies, and is exemplary of the discourse that is integrated into Egyptian society in general towards Women's bodies.
- The State Information Service was portrayed as having a role in briefing the international community of the efforts put by the State, and the way international media handle Egyptian affairs, whereas the role of the Service is to provide complete and comprehensive data on crimes of Violence against Women, and statistics based on gender to facilitate the consideration of gender based inequality for all issues and institutions.

The fifth chapter: regarding the challenges faced by state entities tasked with the application of the strategy, the fifth chapter, entitled "analysis of the internal environment for stakeholders" deals with the strengths, weaknesses, available opportunities and threats (SWOT-Analysis) of several bodies, whether governmental or non-governmental. Other bodies have been added to the ministries and agencies referred to above: the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Manpower, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the National Council for Human Rights and the National Council for Disability, which is a very important step, in addition to some civil society organizations, such as the Association for Communication Technology for Development (ACT) and the Initiative of Female Egyptian Lawyers.

Although the preamble of the strategy refers to the involvement of the entire Egyptian society in addressing those crimes, the process of the implementation of the strategy has not been published nor has there been any information on the committees tasked with its implementation in order to allow for general follow-up of such implementation or approval from the outset. Most factors of weakness and most threats revolve around the lack of

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<sup>2</sup> Ali Gomaa: looking at uncovered Women is normal and should not be followed by thought":  
<http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/793494>

material resources, along with other problems, such as the lack of sufficient human resources and the lack of a monitoring mechanism. Most strength factors lie in cooperation agreements which have not been previously announced and about which there is no information. Most importantly, the following factors which could provide opportunities for follow-up and monitoring, or which could tackle some problems:

- The Ministry of Education: one of the strengths is the "absence of manifestations of discrimination based on sex in the pre-university education system" which is unrealistic and ignores all crimes of violence against girls and minors which have become rampant in Egyptian schools and institutes. Additionally, there is a lack of policies to ensure non-discrimination and the use of materials in the curriculum which emphasises the specific and limited roles of Women inspired by the role society gives Women and the dominance of males over them. This part also failed to present a mechanism to purify the curricula of any educational materials reinforcing the patriarchal culture, it also did not address how to integrate information and studies on crimes of Violence against Women.
- The Ministry of Higher Education: the first reference to the patriarchal culture of the Egyptian community appears here only, and it is limited to higher education institutions in rural areas, Upper Egypt and border governorates only which is contrary to reality. Additionally, the religious restraints present in "the various categories of the Egyptian population and which, in Islam and Christianity, encourage the care and good treatment of Women" do not reflect reality at all, as many religious interpretations are used to justify violence and discrimination against Women, in addition to strengthening opportunities to patronise Women and validating the need to care for them which is extremely problematic from a feminist perspective. In addition thereto, the section on threats contradicts the last point, manifested in the reference to extraneous ideas and values which would give Women the absolute freedom and which do not take into account Egyptian values and habits. It is noteworthy that this strengthens enmity against civil society, and is considered an extremely patriarchal idea which is very reminiscent of the discourse on cultural specificity which is used to continue the violence and discrimination against Women and the Egyptian government's reservations on several articles of international conventions and charters - which the aforementioned strategy confirms.
- The Ministry of Interior: one of the factors of strength is the establishment of police stations to combat crimes of Violence against Women within the directorates of the Republic and granting access to Women to the post of major-general and the Ministry's coordination with local and international entities to hone the skills of workers, while it does not publish any information regarding this aspect in transparency. There was also a reference to the small number of female police officers as a weak point seeing the security conditions, reinforcing the idea of the inability of Women to work in this field under these circumstances. Furthermore, there was a reference in the threats to the reluctance of survivors to report crimes and their tendency to revoke the report at times, without addressing the underlying causes,



including lack of respect for the privacy of the survivors' data in the police reports and the fact that state actors themselves commit those crimes sometimes and the fact that police officers and the police institution stall and at times prevent further litigation.

- Yet again a threat is mentioned relating to the enmity against civil society and the international community in the vision of the strategy due to the inaccuracy and lack of objectivity of the statistics and data originating from foreign sources. This is very problematic because it presents civil society as a direct threat to the strategy itself, thereby reducing any chances to follow up the implementation of the strategy, which is naturally the role of civil society organizations and feminist organizations. This reflects the absence of any mechanisms for transparency in the implementation mechanism of the strategy. There is also a reference to the declining value system which affected "virtue and respect for Women" which enhances the link between these crimes and Women's honor and morals, and encourages societal justifications used for such crimes and emphasises the societal stigma related to such crimes against Women.
- The Ministry of Health: the presence of special programmes on Violence against Women was registered as a point of strength, yet these tackle only femal genital mutilation and maternal mortality monitoring, which excludes all other forms of violent crimes. It is mentioned that there are only 8 stations nationwide to treat mental illness which is very insufficient and not consistent with the idea that rehabilitation of survivors of these crimes is necessary.
- The Ministry of Justice: there is a reference to the small number of forensic physicians and the absence of shifts during the night and during official holidays as a weak point, without addressing the lack of training to deal with survivors and the lack of appropriate locations and tools at the Department of Forensic Medicine. Our field research has shown, for example, that dirty bed linen are used in the Department of Forensic Medicine in Ramses Street, Cairo and the examination room door does not close which is contrary to the survivor's right to privacy and which makes her visible by passers-by in the corridor room.
- The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics: there are currently research opportunities on violence and the cost of Violence against Women, in cooperation with the National Council for Women and the United Nations Population Fund. It is necessary to push for it to be published transparently and openly, and to follow up its results and recommendations, as has been noted above.
- The Coptic Orthodox Church: some points were inserted as available opportunities in a way completely contradictory to reality such as "the excellent relationship between Muslims and Christians at the grass-roots level", which is very misleading because it ignores recurring sectarian incidents and forced displacement and the resulting practices and crimes of Violence against Women, whether physical, sexual or economic. This is in addition to inserting a point stating that "the security situation has

improved somewhat" which is very misleading, as mentioned in the threats, and it is contrary to the foregoing: "sectarian-based violence especially against Coptic Women and girls". It should be noted that discrimination against Christian Women by virtue of state legislation is not tackled, especially with regard to their private sphere.

- The National Council for Human Rights: the absence of a national law that criminalizes all forms of Violence against Women as a threat was mentioned, while completely failing to address the impunity towards both state actors and non-state actors. The amendment to prison regulations, for example, is also not mentioned. This is needed to ensure that violent, unhealthy and demeaning vaginal examinations are no longer performed on female prisoners.
- The National Council for Women: the absence of an executive capacity for the Council was mentioned as a weakness, underscoring the need to modify its powers so that it can activate, implement and follow up on the strategy. Additionally "the lack of institutional respect at some governmental agencies in implementing programmes to combat violence, the lack of coordination with the Council to avoid double standards in the activities" is mentioned, thus enhancing the aforementioned point while stressing the necessity to develop a follow-up and coordination mechanism to avoid that. As regards the threats, it was very noticeable that the following was mentioned as a threat: "the lack of concerted efforts by some civil society organizations in supporting the activities of the Council", while the Council excludes many feminist organizations. The strategy includes a very limited number of those organizations and they are not consulted which reflects that the Council itself is the cause of that threat.

## **Opportunities for Engagement by Civil Society with NSVAW?**

The subsequent chapters of the strategy contain a detailed presentation of the implementation activities to be undertaken by various entities affiliated with the State with respect to crimes of Violence against Women. Despite the presence of some gaps therein-as will be explained below-it is a good opportunity to cooperate and perhaps also a space to monitor the implementation of the strategy, and it entails the following:

1. The Ministry of Interior: preparing and printing a guidance manual for those working in the Ministry in the field of Violence against Women (2015-2016)
2. Conducting a study for a mechanism to statistically account for all the data on incidents of Violence against Women and the verdicts issued in that regard in order to monitor the main causes leading to violence, and channel that into the security system so as to prevent the causes of violence (2015)
3. Increasing the amount of surveillance cameras in public places to monitor cases of sexual assault and harassment

4. Conducting a study on legislative amendments to protect the privacy of the date of the abused
5. The Ministry of Youth: conducting a national study of 22 thousand families on the prevalence of violence and the economic cost resulting therefrom (2015-2016)
6. The National Council for Human Rights: preparing an annual report to monitor the social and economic conditions of society, including Women's and children's rights (annually)
7. Organising field visits to prisons in order to inspect the conditions of male and female prisoners (periodical at a rate of one visit per month)
8. Preparing a study on the psychological, societal and criminal dimensions of the occurrence of Violence against Women based on their gender - belief - custom - race
9. Training lawyers to deal with cases of sexual violence (2015-2016)
10. The National Council for Women: conducting a study on all national laws and proposing legislative amendments
11. Supreme Media Council: training workers in the field of media to address the file of Violence against Women, because there is no proposal for the coordination with feminist groups and organizations who have [dealt with this issue](#) and have experience therewith
12. The Ministry of Culture: the production of various artistic materials on the dangers of Violence against Women (movies - plays - songs - artistic performances)
13. Creating a suitable environment for abused Women to report incidents of violence and to take advantage of protection and assistance services and programmes. This section did not explain how the National Council for Women will develop the hotline service, it is also not clear how many will be trained to improve the performance of those working in Women's complaints offices nor is the training methodology itself explained. Furthermore, it is not clear whether the "safe cities" program offers legal advice only, or legal services as well
14. The Ministry of Higher Education: activating the role of the equal opportunity units to receive the complaints of abused Women, without reference to how to deal with such complaints and the follow-up and support or training of the recipients of the complaints regarding dealing with complainants
15. There was no reference to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Unit at Cairo University, which was founded as a result of the prevalence of sexual harassment crimes which led to the establishment of "a group of academics who are interested to initiate a policy to counter sexual harassment at Cairo University. Student representatives and some civil society organizations working in this field also participated in the drafting ", which

should be mirrored in all universities and colleges nationwide, to emphasise the goals of the strategy and address those crimes at a university level.

16. In the same context as above, there was no mention of putting in place policies against sexual harassment and sexual violence crimes in all ministries and government entities, which must contain mechanisms to ensure that all perpetrators of such crimes are punished, and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for Women occupying positions in these bodies.

### ***Conclusion***

There is no doubt as to the importance of the design and deployment of the national strategy for the Elimination of Violence against Women, it is a serious and significant first step for the continued presentation of an issue affecting the Egyptian society in general, whether socially, economically or politically, and Women, their physical integrity and their basic right to live in dignity and safety, in particular. However, the inherent gaps in this strategy are largely apparent due to the absence of a feminist perspective. This is probably the result of the lack of a genuine societal dialogue thereabout, including ways to implement and monitor the implementation thereof on the ground. But the real question here is, is the absence of a feminist orientation for this strategy deliberate due to the profound challenges this group will pose to societal norms and beliefs deeply entrenched for long, as well as the challenge to the patriarchal culture rooted in the Egyptian society in all its categories, or does the State consider Women's issues peripheral and separate from the general societal context, and is the State therefore satisfied with mere temporary and isolated solution for such issues?