

Basic Principles and General Principles for Women

The Autonomous Administration of Jazeera Canton of Rojava

President of the Women's Committee

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Because our societies are ruled by the masculine principle of domination, women face many political, social, economical, cultural and psychological problems. This affects women as a whole, degrading and violating her rights. Patriarchy opposes the development of woman due to many laws (one-sided divorce, forced marriage and polygamy), leading to the continuation of an era where the role of women has a negative impact not only on women but on society in general. Apart from this there are many other problems that make women's lives difficult.

We believe that women play a critical role in the family (the basis of society), and therefore women's freedom will guarantee the creation of a democratic and free family and society. Also the level of development of societies depends on the strengthening of the role of women and her participation in the construction and development of society. Women's work will therefore continue to guarantee the defense of her dignity and the right to freedom and sovereignty over herself and her children. From now on, women will insist on their existence because the women's liberation movement manifests the urgent need for freedom from all forms of backward thinking, murder and oppression.

Since the safeguarding of women's freedom and rights is one of the fundamental goals of the Democratic Self-Administration, all women's issues must be resolved, the level of women in all arenas should be improved, women should be ensured a decent life and be defended from oppression and coercion and the legitimate rights of women must be guaranteed.

We therefore set out a series of basic principles and general principles related to women, ensuring their equality with men in order to build a democratic, ecological and free society.

Basic Principles:

1. In the areas of the Democratic Self-Administration the battle against the mentality of oppression and backward thinking is a moral duty for everyone.
2. Equality between women and men, in all areas of life.
3. Women have the right to participate in elections and governance on every level.
4. The co-chair principle is fundamental to all institutions.
5. Women have the right to organize in political, social, economic, cultural and defense institutions within the parameters set by the Social Contract.
6. In emergency situations, representatives of women's organizations and human rights organizations should be invited when the Legislative Council discusses laws.
7. The will of women must be taken into consideration when enforcing women's laws.
8. The labor laws of the Democratic Self-Administration will ensure equality between men and women in terms of employment and wages.
9. Equal weight will be given to the witness testimony of women and men in court.

10. Marriage without the consent of the bride is prohibited.
Punishment: imprisonment of one month up to three months and a fine of 50,000-100,000 Syrian Pounds if the accusation is made before marriage.
 Imprisonment of three months up to one year and a fine of 100,000-300,000 Syrian Pounds if the accusation is made after marriage. The woman has the right to file an accusation for up to one year.
11. The elimination of the bride price/dowry system, because its aim is to make women into commodities. Women and men will support one another to live an equal shared life.
12. Marriage lawsuits will be filed in civil courts.
13. Polygamy is prohibited.
Punishment:
- A. Those who violate the law are sentenced to imprisonment of one to two years and a fine of 500,000 Syrian Pounds. If the person is working for the Democratic Self-Administration, the employee is suspended from work.
- B. The religious matchmaker and both parties involved in the agreement will be punished.
- C. If the wife is pregnant, the child's identity and life necessities are provided for and the husband and wife will be separated.
14. The request for divorce is the right of both parties, and is to be concluded with the consent of both parties. To show respect for the shared life neither partner may marry for 6 months after the divorce or death of a spouse.
15. Men and women are entitled to an equal share of inheritance, which will be regulated by inheritance law.
16. These types of marriage are prohibited: 'Heyirandin' (to exchange daughters between two families as brides for the sons of each family), 'Berdêlî' (the right of the son of a woman's paternal uncle to claim her as a bride, and if she refuses he can forbid her from ever marrying), 'Zewaca ji ber kuştinê' (giving a woman as a 'gift of consolation' in the case of a blood feud between two families).
Punishment:
- A. 'Heyirandin': 10 years imprisonment.
- B. 'Berdêlî': 10 years imprisonment.
- C. 'Zewaca ji ber kuştinê': ranging from three years to seven years imprisonment.
17. Whoever commits an 'honor killing' of a woman is guilty of a crime, and will be punished under the law of murder.
18. Both spouses are severely and equally punished for adultery. The betrayal of a spouse through adulterous sexual relations is punished.
Punishment: Imprisonment of one year up to two years on the basis of the accusation of the woman or man.
19. Trade of children and women is prohibited in all its forms (sexual exploitation, prostitution) and those who do so will be punished severely.
Punishment: Imprisonment from three years up to a life sentence and a fine of 500,000 – 400,000 Syrian Pounds.

20. Violence and sexism against women are prohibited and are classified as crimes. The Democratic Self-Administration must oppose all forms of oppression and sexism and develop its laws to defend and take care of those who have been subjected to it.
21. The Democratic Self-Administration must guarantee the rights of children and protect them from all forms of coercion and abuse.
22. Women and men have equal citizenship rights before the law.
23. It is the responsibility of the Democratic Self-Administration to ensure the basic health and social necessities for a free and dignified life and the protection of widows and widowers.
24. The marriage of girls under the age of 18 is forbidden.
Punishment: Imprisonment ranging from three years up to seven years for both the party who arranged the marriage and the intended husband.
25. The custody of children in case of divorce is with the mother until the children reach 15 years of age. Afterwards, it is the right of the child to choose to live with either the father or mother. It is the duty of both mother and father to care for the children.
26. The approval of both mother and father is required for children to move out of the home.
27. If a case is concerning women or the family is being heard in court, a representative from women's institutions is required to be present. The opinion of this institution should be taken as priority.
28. A maternity charter of the rights of women workers will be organized according to the workers' law of the Democratic Self Administration.
29. In case of divorce the bride price is either returned or its value paid back by the man.
30. The Democratic Self-Administration will build up centers for pregnant and breastfeeding women. These centers will take care of the situation of the mother, the child and unborn children.