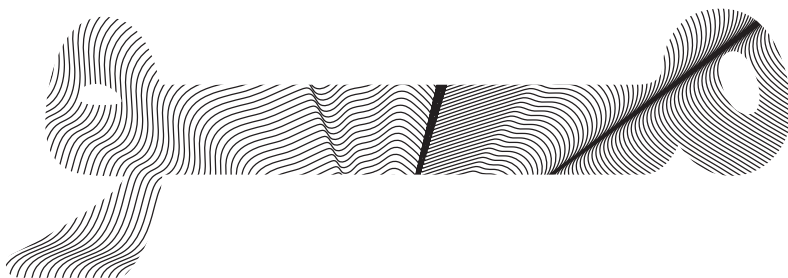
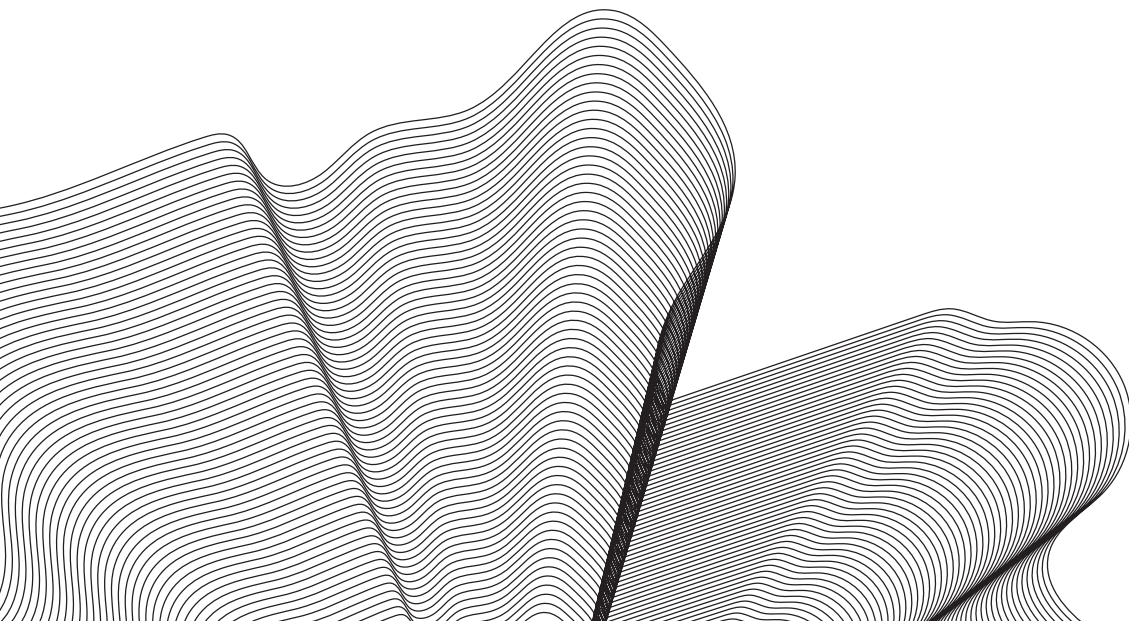


VAGUE



WAVE



Curator's statement



Paris 1st of July 2022

This exhibition comes ten years after the wave of Arab Spring revolutions and examines its repercussions on the current Syrian feminist wave. It also touches on the impact of the Syrian Women's Political Movement five years after its founding in breaking the stereotyped image of women's positions. Its energy in moving that wave towards achieving the presence of women in the public sphere and at the political decision making table.

The exhibition took place within the framework of the Fourth General conference of the movement gathering nearly a hundred Syrians in 20 countries around the world and held under the slogan "Syrian Women Decision-Makers". It was held in hybridity; virtually in Syria, with in an person presence in Paris and Istanbul.

◆ Wave

It is also called a wave (in plural: waves).

In physics it is a form of energy transfer and dynamic disturbance (change of equilibrium). Waves are distinguished from particles by having a set of physical behaviours, including propagation, reflection, refraction, interference, intersection, diffraction, scattering, dispersing.

Its properties also differ between material and immaterial mediums, as well as its forms of movement as it may move horizontally or longitudinally. Waves can be periodic in which case those quantities oscillate repeatedly about an equilibrium (resting) value at some frequency.

Properties of a wave

Essays: about waves



Diffraction | The History of Global Feminist Waves, Yara Khalil

Refraction | the revolutionary feminist wave and its refractions, Shams Antar

Overlap and intersection | The Rugged Journey of the Women's Movement, Hawazen Khaddaj

Direction | Impact of the Syrian Women's Political Movement, Lina Wafai

Plurality | Feminist Men, Usama Ashour

Messages:



Reflection | The words of the elected leaders in the General Secretariat of the Syrian Women's Political Movement

Transition | Statements of the movement's founders

Spread | Interview conducted by Warda Al-Yassin with members of the Syrian women's political movement

Scattering | a message to Syrian Women in Exile, Khawla Dunia

Ripple | Thuraya Hejazi addresses young Syrian women

Artworks:



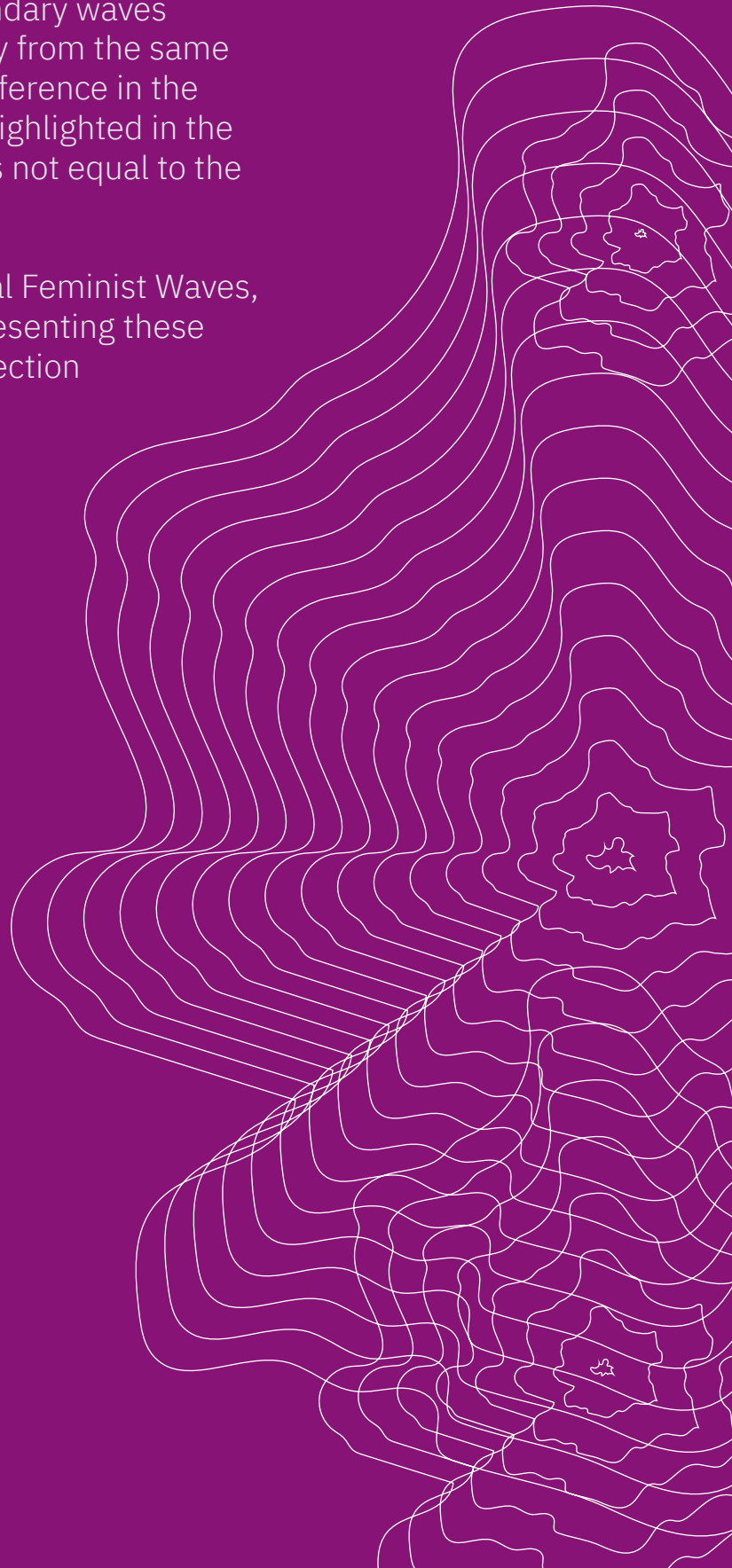
Iridescence | Concept - Curator; Alma Salem

In collaboration with the artists Hakawati and Zoya (Their faces, Their Moments, Their messages)

Diffraction

Diffraction is described as secondary waves that emit together but differently from the same wave. In diffraction there is a difference in the intensity of the wave positions highlighted in the fact that the width of its edges is not equal to the interference area .

In her text, *The History of Global Feminist Waves*, Yara Khalil takes us on a tour presenting these waves in overlapping and intersection



A History of Global Feminist Waves

◆◆ Yara Khalil

Faced with the pressure and demands for political, civil, economic, and social equality, the world is obligated to recognize the stages that the feminist movement has gone through. This comes as the patriarchal ideology proves to be detrimental for both women and men alike.

Some believe that feminism is a fad, a trend of this moment in time, while others consider it a social media plague, an outcome of the communication revolution. How did feminist movements start? And where are they heading?

Since its inception, feminist movements faced accusations of radicalism and sexism against men, while women's grievances were denied. These accusations of extremism and sexism neglect the power and authority it entails. Only men possess this power and authority in the family, society, and even in government institutions.

If we were to go back in time to hear where the demands of the first feminist wave stemmed from, we would find that discrimination, oppression, and gender gaps existed from the time of the ancient Greeks, starting with Aristotle, followed by Rousseau, Nietzsche and Freud, all the way to Picasso and Woody Allen. All of these men considered women subservient to men and their empires. Misogyny and depiction of women as inferior were clearly present in intellectual and political literature. The initial spark of the first feminist wave was the demand for women's right to vote. Later they entered broader discussions about gender identity and their role as women in the world. Feminists' demands varied according to time and need, which explains the different contexts of each of the consecutive waves.

First-wave feminism - the right to vote

The first wave lasted between the late 19th century and early 20th century. At that point, women began to question why they didn't have the same civil and political rights as men.

The Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 is widely considered the inception of the first wave when 200 women gathered to discuss their rights in voting, education, political participation, and equal pay. The godmothers of the first wave were Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

This wave was characterized by women's demands for general rights similar to men's. By 1920 they were finally able to reap the fruit of this wave, mainly the right to vote, which they won in New Zealand, Egypt, Switzerland, the UK, and eventually in the US.

In the first wave, these seemingly pragmatic and obvious political demands were marred by failures, as white women distanced themselves from women of color. It was apparent that the wave aimed to demand the rights for white middle-class

women only. Some sources cite that when black men gained the right to vote in 1870, white women protested and said: “Is it acceptable that slaves (as they referred to them) have the right to vote, while white women still do not have this right?”

Second-wave feminism - the personal is political

While the first wave focused on a few obvious demands that were achieved in the end, the second wave approached gender from a more profoundly philosophical perspective. The discussion about gender, sex, and discrimination against women in all public and private spaces and levels, had begun. Women desperately needed to free their bodies from the authority of men and reconsider the core relationship between the two genders.

Betty Friedan’s book, *The Feminine Mystique*, is widely considered the spark that started this wave. Her book tackles society’s view of women and their status, which was defined by being confined in the home, taking care of the family, and being treated as men’s private property.

The second wave began in the early 1960s and continued until 1980. The wave championed demands for gender equality, combating gender-based discrimination, liberating the body and women taking back control over it. During this period, many feminist scholars wrote about these issues in media and literature, prompting middle-class women to meet and discuss them further. In these meetings, women shared stories of their struggle against the patriarchy. They soon realized that their experiences were similar to one another and that they were not alone.

During these discussions, it became apparent that the oppression of patriarchal society was based on the isolation and division of women. Women realized that they urgently needed to share their experiences, support, and listen to each other’s stories. Thus the concept of women’s sisterhood was born.

The Women’s Liberation Movement, led by feminist author Robin Morgan, set up discussion sessions that played a significant role in shaping the ideology and concept of sisterhood. The movement adopted the phrase “the personal is political” as its motto.

During this wave, the concept of intersectional feminism was founded by feminist scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw. The concept was developed as a reaction to the feeling of alienation that black women and women of color experienced within the feminist movements; the intersecting racial and gender oppression they faced, as women of color on the one hand, and their gender identity as women, on the other.

Most notable in the second wave is the term “her-story,” a phrase first attributed to Robin Morgan and later formalized in the Oxford Dictionary. The term is derived from “her + history.” Morgan argued that women needed to write history from an alternative feminist perspective, just as history had previously been written by men, solely from their own perspective.

The most notable achievements of this wave can be exemplified by the drafting of various international documents related to women’s rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, despite these important achievements, this second wave, like its predecessor, was monopolized by white middle-class women.

Third-wave feminism - reflecting on feminism

The third wave started in the mid-90s, at the height of a shift in cultural, economic, and social diversity, which seemed to be a critical reflection on the feminist movement itself. During this wave, women acknowledged the virtues of the first and second waves and their effect on the lived realities of that time. However, they also identified the need to reflect on some of their positions that seemed incomplete for women, especially in the post-colonial modern era. Pioneers of this wave took up power and authority as tools for their struggle. They refused to identify themselves as victims, developed a new discourse distinct from the traditional feminist one, and tackled gender discrimination issues head-on.

Third-wave feminists, such as Rebecca Walker, criticized their predecessors stating that the activists of the first two waves were elitist and that they had distanced themselves from women of color, transgender women, immigrants, and even women from lower economic and social classes, to avoid any potential clashes with men and achieve their demands. Thus, the third wave appeared as a critical reflection on the feminist movement itself, a reconsideration of the movement and its governance.

Fourth-wave feminism - Me too

Clearly, the fourth wave started in 2012, coinciding with campaigns against sexual harassment and assault in public spaces and workplaces, such as the film industry and media.

Social media played a significant role in cross-continental feminist campaigns, shedding light on the universality of women's suffering, regardless of their cultural and racial background, and economic and social status.

Fourth-wave feminism is focused on male-dominated work environments in certain fields, and issues of pay equity. The "me too" campaign is considered one of the most important movements launched during the fourth wave. The campaign started with the case of Harvey Weinstein, a prominent Hollywood producer, which revealed a different side to Hollywood, one that is full of corruption and male dominance.

The recent feminist wave highlights how the digital age revealed the ways in which the patriarchal system perpetuates obstacles to achieving human societies based on civic values that believe in identity, gender, and political individuality. This brief review of the history of the feminist struggle, clearly illustrates that women are not detached from the civic and human context.

Perhaps what most inspires hope, and distinguishes feminist movements from other political movements in the world, is that they applied critical and analytical tools that allowed them to develop and directly address the requirements of each stage. It can be said that the efforts of feminists in the future will continue to focus on confronting patriarchal oppression and engaging with decision-making as another serious step towards building a better future and changing the current reality of women.

* The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Syrian Women's Political movement



Refraction

Refraction of light is one of the phenomena to which light is subjected. Our awareness of this phenomenon contributes to our understanding of Nature's transformations that we encounter every day in its multitude, its technical and scientific uses.

Refraction of light: is the deviation of light from its path when it passes from one transparent medium to another. The relationship between incidental light and deflected light according to Snell's law measures the refractive index by calculating the ratio between the speed of light in a vacuum and its speed in a substance.

In her text, Shams Antar introduces us to the revolutionary feminist wave and its refractions that accompanied the Arab Spring uprising

The Revolutionary Feminist Wave and the Arab Spring

◆◆ Shams Antar

When the waves decide to sweep the shores, No force can stop them. These are the waves of feminism driven by the wind of change.

First-wave feminism demanded women's legal rights, such as the right to vote and own property. The second wave called for sexual liberation and reproductive rights, addressed issues related to women's status in the family and the workplace, and demanded the end of discrimination. Women of color, queer, immigrant, and religious minority women played a prominent role throughout the third wave which embraced the diversity of its female activists' individual characteristics, dismantled gender stereotypes, and focused on ideologies of the poststructural perspective of gender identity and sexuality.

Today, a fourth wave is heading our way. What sets this wave apart is its digital presence, as online platforms are utilized to defend against those who attack feminists. Sexual harassment and assault out on the streets and in the workplace, scandals of sexual abuse, and the continued violence against, and murder of, women are critical issues fueling the fourth wave. While 2012 gang-rape in Delhi and other high-profile incidents, represented the spark that set the wave in motion.

Opinion differs on the specific date of this wave's emergence, however, it is clear that it was not the result of a particular moment or event, but rather the result of decades of competing ideas within the feminist movements. The majority recognize 2012 as the starting point of the wave, a decade that witnessed many major political events worldwide, including the Arab Spring, where women played a significant role.

Statistics in Egypt show that women had a strong presence in the Tahrir Square demonstrations in January 2011. Some reports estimate women's participation at around 50 percent and included women from different social and ideological backgrounds. Protesters shouted "bread, freedom, social justice", such an optimistic slogan!

However, the conflict soon narrowed down to two sides disinterested in women's rights. The Islamists - who had the only organized political movement, and the

military - which had the power to oppress - while the youth, feminist, and civil movements were pushed aside.

According to the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights report, "The Year 2012: The Massive 'Going Out' of the Egyptian Women", Egypt witnessed one of the highest declines in women's political participation. This setback was marked by representation levels and the use of sexual harassment as a systematic method of intimidation to deter women from participating in demonstrations and sit-ins. According to "Operation Anti Sexual Harassment", rape cases were reported in Tahrir Square on the second anniversary of the revolution. After a promising democratic civil beginning, the Arab Spring brought Islamist, traditional, and other counter-revolution forces to power, similar to what happened in Yemen, Egypt, and Syria.

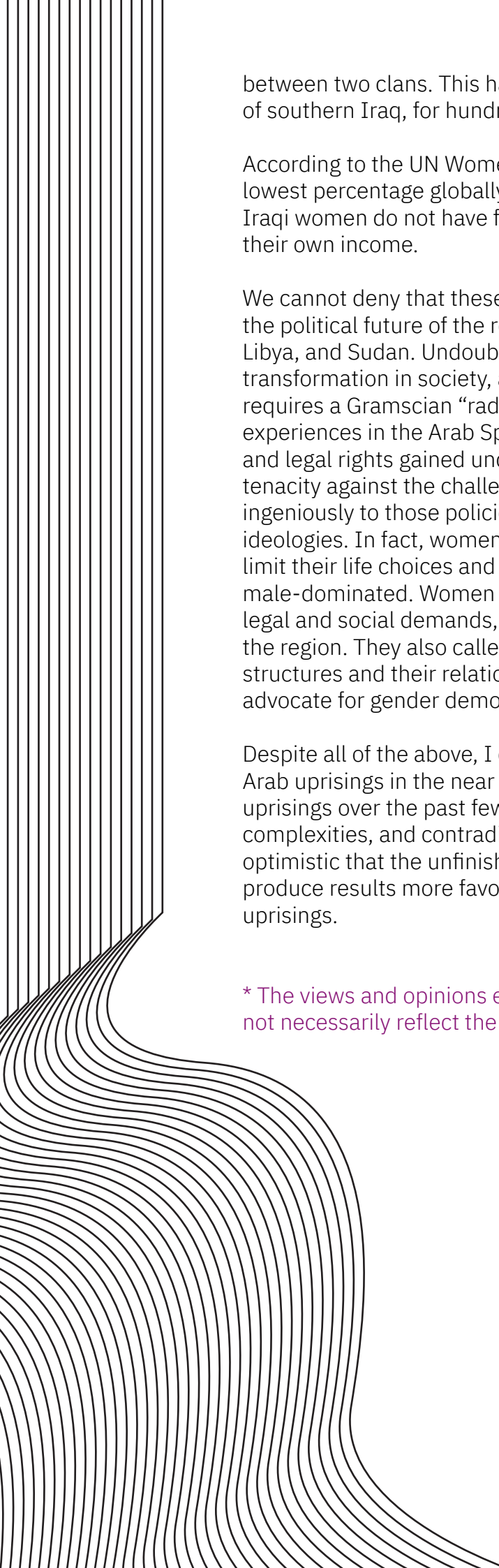
In Syria, feminists faced painful shock when they witnessed terrorist movements (such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, al-Nusra Front, and other Salafists) practicing primitive criminal violations against women, sending women back to bleak forgotten times. These movements brought back the trafficking of women, the enforcement of women to wear a black burqa, and prohibiting them from leaving their homes.

Feminists who were enthusiastic at the beginning were forced to re-consider the revolutions' impacts. They found themselves discussing and debating issues that pioneering feminists had dealt with, like hijab, child marriage, and education, which represented a tragic setback for women who had come a long way on their path to liberation.

Women have lost the most in these revolutions. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented the death of 13,843 women over 18 at the hands of countless perpetrators, starting from the beginning of the Syrian Revolution on March 15, 2011, until March 1, 2021. A study by the UN's Population Fund revealed that nearly 145,000 Syrian families depend on women as the breadwinners and sole caretakers of the family while facing the additional challenges of immigration, displacement, widespread literacy, detention, and many other challenges.

Tunisia might represent a beacon of hope with its long history of supporting human rights, in comparison to other Arab countries. The 2014 constitution, which was approved by the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly elected on October 23rd, 2011, is seen as an important legislative gain for Tunisians from the "Jasmine Revolution". This constitution dedicated articles 21 and 46 in the rights and freedoms section, to equality and combating gender discrimination. Article 46 stipulates, "the state commits to protecting women's acquired rights and working to consolidate and develop those rights". And article 21, "All citizens, male and female, have equal rights and duties, and are equal before the law without any discrimination."

Iraqi women have faced various challenges and incidents, reflecting their harsh reality. In 2015, a dispute broke out between two clans in the southern city of Iraq Basra, where weapons (including heavy weapons) were used. Both clans suffered injuries and deaths. To end this war, the aggressors had to hand over 40 women, including minors, as "restitution" to the other clan. These women were forcibly married to men of the opposing clan. In another incident, in the same city, 11 women were offered as restitution to resolve an armed conflict



between two clans. This has been considered common practice among the clans of southern Iraq, for hundreds of years.

According to the UN Women, only 14% of Iraqi women work, making it the lowest percentage globally. What is troubling about this number is that 86% of Iraqi women do not have financial independence, since they do not generate their own income.

We cannot deny that these significant developments had a crucial impact on the political future of the region, including Syria, Tunisia, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, and Sudan. Undoubtedly, a profoundly sustainable cultural and social transformation in society, and an implicit change in gender relations and roles, requires a Gramscian “radical intellectual revolution.” Reflecting on women’s experiences in the Arab Spring revolutions revealed the fragile nature of social and legal rights gained under authoritarian regimes. It also highlights women’s tenacity against the challenges, as they faced gender restrictions and responded ingeniously to those policies explicitly aimed at imposing patriarchal and familial ideologies. In fact, women have been speaking up against Islamists’ attempts to limit their life choices and make cultural, economic, and social fields ever more male-dominated. Women have placed issues related to women’s rights, and their legal and social demands, at the center of all political discourse on democracy in the region. They also called on every movement seeking to remove authoritarian structures and their relations, privileges, social and economic injustice, to advocate for gender democracy and justice as well.

Despite all of the above, I do not believe anyone can foresee the impacts of the Arab uprisings in the near future. Societies that have witnessed revolutionary uprisings over the past few years face a new system whose features, complexities, and contradictions are not yet clear. One may, and should, remain optimistic that the unfinished revolutions in the region have the potential to produce results more favorable to the democratic movements that sparked these uprisings.

* The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Syrian Women’s Political movement

Overlap & intersection



Interference is the act of superposition of two or more light waves emitted by two coherent sources traveling in the same medium, where the coherent sources provide a light wave of the same frequency and constant phase difference for separate waves.

There are two types of wave interference, Constructive Interference: It occurs when two overlapping waves are of the same amplitude and phase, the intensity of the resulting wave will be higher than the two separate waves, more specifically, the amplitude of the resulting wave will be twice the amplitude of the waves that will be superimposed. This interference is called “constructive interference”. As for destructive interference, it occurs if two superposed waves have the same amplitude but are in opposite phase, then the intensity of the resulting wave will be less than the two separate waves. We can calculate the amplitude of the two waves, but since the two are in opposite phase, they both cancel each other out.

In her essay entitled “The Rugged Journey of the Women’s Movement” The researcher Hawazen Khaddaj sheds the light on the Syrian feminist waves in their diversity

The Rough Path of Feminist Movements

◆◆ Hawazen Khaddaj

Since the emergence of patriarchal societies and male prejudice, women have experienced marginalization and witnessed the loss of their rights. Male dominance and control over women led to the development of the feminist movement, in three waves. In the mid-19th century, the first wave of feminism emerged when women's issues were raised alongside the abolitionist movement in the United States. At that time, the first wave focused on gaining women's right to vote, as a starting point for the recognition of their civil, political, economic, and social rights. After World War II, the second feminist wave sought to lay an intellectual foundation to bridge gaps in gender bias and reconsider the status of women, not only within society but in various fields of thought. In the eighties, the third wave continued the path of the first and second waves. However, it differed in that it criticized the systems that legalized the exclusion and marginalization of women, dismantling the masculine postulates in different ways than the previous waves. Plurality was proposed in place of heteronormative gender binaries, and diversity in the place of uniformity, revolutionizing the discourse away from the constraints of masculine/feminine dualities.

The Syrian feminist movement

Contrary to what was stated in the introduction about global feminist waves, its unifying discourse and goals and the pairing between the practical and the theoretical, the Syrian feminist movement did not have cognitive standards. This movement remained immersed in its classic problems – imprisoned in the same political, economic, and social demands that persist to this day. Throughout different periods in history, the feminist movement in Syria was linked to the conditions of the state and subject to its socio-political systems that are difficult to change. Such systems impeded the actualization of the feminists' demands and the success of their revolutionary project to dismantle the patriarchal structures and transition to a new stage in their development. Therefore, the Syrian movement cannot be divided according to the changing demands and goals of women, but rather according to the different historical stages and their ability to persist through them.

The beginnings

Syria witnessed the seeds of an early feminist movement, dating back to the end of the Ottoman period. The spread of the intellectual renaissance in Arab society contributed to providing an appropriate environment for the emergence of feminist activists. These activists demanded rights and worked for them in a

totally male-dominated society. They broke taboos and established a movement that called for the liberation of women, demanding their rights to intellectual and social status, in order to become active members of the state and society at large.

In 1879, Julia al-Hourani established the first feminist movement in Damascus. Then in 1910, Mary Ajami founded the first feminist magazine in the Arab region, al-Arous. The magazine called for the liberation of women and explored women's issues, to strengthen the presence of the female voice, through different women writers. Additionally, across various social and economic fields (health, education, services...) women formed active associations to expand their presence in society. The women who formed these cultural and associative movements came from all sectors of Syrian life. Some were seeking to bring about immediate change to the status quo to mitigate its negative aspects while trying to avoid any clashes with the patriarchal structure and its mechanisms for imposing gender discrimination. Other women were shedding light on issues pertaining to women's right to vote and work. Nazik al-Abed and a group of women demanded the right to vote and based their argument on their essential role during the war, similar to the way the American and British women addressed this issue. However, women's exit from the Circle of Harem and achieving their political demands proved to be difficult in the conditions of the Syrian state.

Syria's transition from Ottoman rule to French colonialism ushered in a new stage for the feminist movement. The emergence of identity issues, and their connection to the national struggle for all, added a new layer of resistance to the feminist cause. For women, advocating for a feminist 'qualitative' identity and national identity were one and the same. As revolution against French dominance became a source for feminist activism in 1925, the elitist class established several associations that focused on national, political and human rights. Their demands included reforming laws related to women's personal status (such as raising the marriage age to 17 years old, banning polygamy, and equal inheritance between women and men) in addition to working on gender equality.

The intertwining of women's issues, the inability to separate the societal, the legal, and the political, in addition to the emergence of neglect and discrimination as a political issue, all led women to focus their demands on "equality" and a more supportive, less oppressive and alienating social system. Women tried to utilize the laws available to them, those that would contribute to advancing their cause, such as the adoption of compulsory education for all, (male and female), which broke the cycle of preventing women from learning and working. As for their political rights, they were not able to obtain them, nor did they succeed in achieving radical legal reforms later on.

Successive governments, repeated demands

The independence of the Syrian state represented a new stage for the feminist movement in its quest to change the prevailing political culture and system, by moving away from only social demands to more political demands. Accordingly, several political associations were established. Some demanded political rights for women, while others worked on spreading political awareness, in addition to other services and development associations for women.

These associations helped women obtain the right to vote in the 1949 election, and women's suffrage was passed in the 1950 constitution (notably at a time when many European countries did not grant women this right). Subsequently, women gained the right to vote and run for parliament in 1953 but were still denied the right to run for president. Paradoxically, women's suffrage did not constitute societal progress or equity. Syrian society refused to accept women's candidacies, even for representation in the parliament, as demonstrated by the experience of Soraya al-Hafiz who was the first

Syrian woman to run for Parliament in 1953. Therefore, during this period, women only gained the privilege of voting for men and continued to be marginalized actors in society. The constraints on women's activity increased as the space for activity shrank. In 1954, while the state froze the licenses for independent activities, many of the independent organizations united under the Syrian Women's Union. This pause in activities subsequently caused major disruption and stagnation in women's ability to participate in politics and culture. Ultimately, their participation was practically extinguished with the rise of Hafez al-Assad's dictatorship.

Dictatorship and its impact on the feminist movement

The post-1970 period represented a completely different stage for the feminist movement. In all areas of life, for both women and men, the Baath party dominated and dictated what was possible. Women had lost their civic organizations in favor of the formation of the Women's Union, which limited their development tasks. The Women's Union became part of the ideological state apparatus and was used to block independent civil institutions and women's organizations from escaping the regime's control. While women could work in political parties, they remained under the firm control of the National Front, leaving them without much benefit.

Despite many indicators illustrating women's presence in the public sphere, (such as the increased number of educated, graduate degree holders, workers, employees in various government departments, and their representation in the highest legislative bodies of parliament), these did not provide women with platforms to discuss their rights or related social and political issues. In a reality full of contradiction, the presence of women in the public sphere did not represent an acknowledgment of their rights beyond what was accepted within the patriarchal culture. Dictatorships are characterized by the absence of freedoms and rights and the support of societal hierarchies. Such mechanisms only further shackle women and prevent them from confronting systemic barriers to obtaining rights and distracting them from exploring what could serve their cause.

As the power in Syria was passed from Hafez al-Assad to his son Bashar, women's issues witnessed a significant change. Bashar's unfinished project of economic, political, and societal openness contributed to the regime easing control over women's issues, especially since the issue of women's rights turned into a political priority and an indicator of modernity, which Bashar al-Assad did not want to lose quickly. The first months of Bashar's rule provided relative relief. Activists were allowed to play different roles and many human rights associations and organizations and hundreds of political discussion groups known as "civil society forums" were established. Between 2000 and 2004, several forums led by women emerged. These forums offered opportunities for women to be part of the process of democratic change, to gain their rights, and eliminate exclusion and violence against them. Women participated in the newly formed civil society groups, which issued statements calling for democracy and respect for human rights (statement of 99, then statement of 1000). This new activity raised the regime's alarm, but it did not prevent women from benefiting from some opportunities to write and express their issues individually, without forming their own organizations, as they had previously done during the beginning of the Syrian women's movement.

Women were focused on the societal and legal obstacles impeding their human rights, despite the fact that many feminist campaigns failed to achieve any significant gains, such as their protests against honor killings and advocacy for the rights of women to pass on citizenship to their children. Most importantly to recognize at this stage was that feminists who raised their voices in the face of violence, injustice, and discrimination could no longer be silenced, or stalled under the false pretext that women had already obtained most of their rights in Syria.

The Syrian uprising and its aftermath: a different feminists movement

From the beginning of the Syrian uprising, women rejected societal norms through their active participation in demonstrations for freedom. And since the demands for change and freedom were not exclusive to men, women too were subjected to outright violence, imprisonment and murder, as enemies of the regime. However, even though women experienced equal exposure to violence alongside men in this patriarchal and exclusionary society, this did not constitute sufficient evidence of their rights, nor did it translate to full equality. On the contrary, the issue of women's rights was neglected and postponed. Sometimes, families used regime violence as an excuse to prevent women from participating, especially after the uprising turned into a war that crushed everyone but had a more detrimental impact on women. Thus, women have become more exposed to the system of violence practiced by all parties to the conflict.

The Syrian war has stripped many women of their ability to stand up to the systemic barriers entrenched in society and left them exposed to its attack, in the name of customs and traditions. However, at the same time, it pushed other women to fulfill different roles. The war presented a reason for the feminist movement's return, not only by establishing civil and relief organizations but also by creating different fields of activism where feminists were able to analyze their reality, and become more radical in identifying their problems and demanding their rights, directly challenging the patriarchal structure and its discriminatory mechanisms. They constituted a new generation of the feminist movement that applied its demands for human and legal rights, to make patriarchal guardianship and protection obsolete.

Conclusion

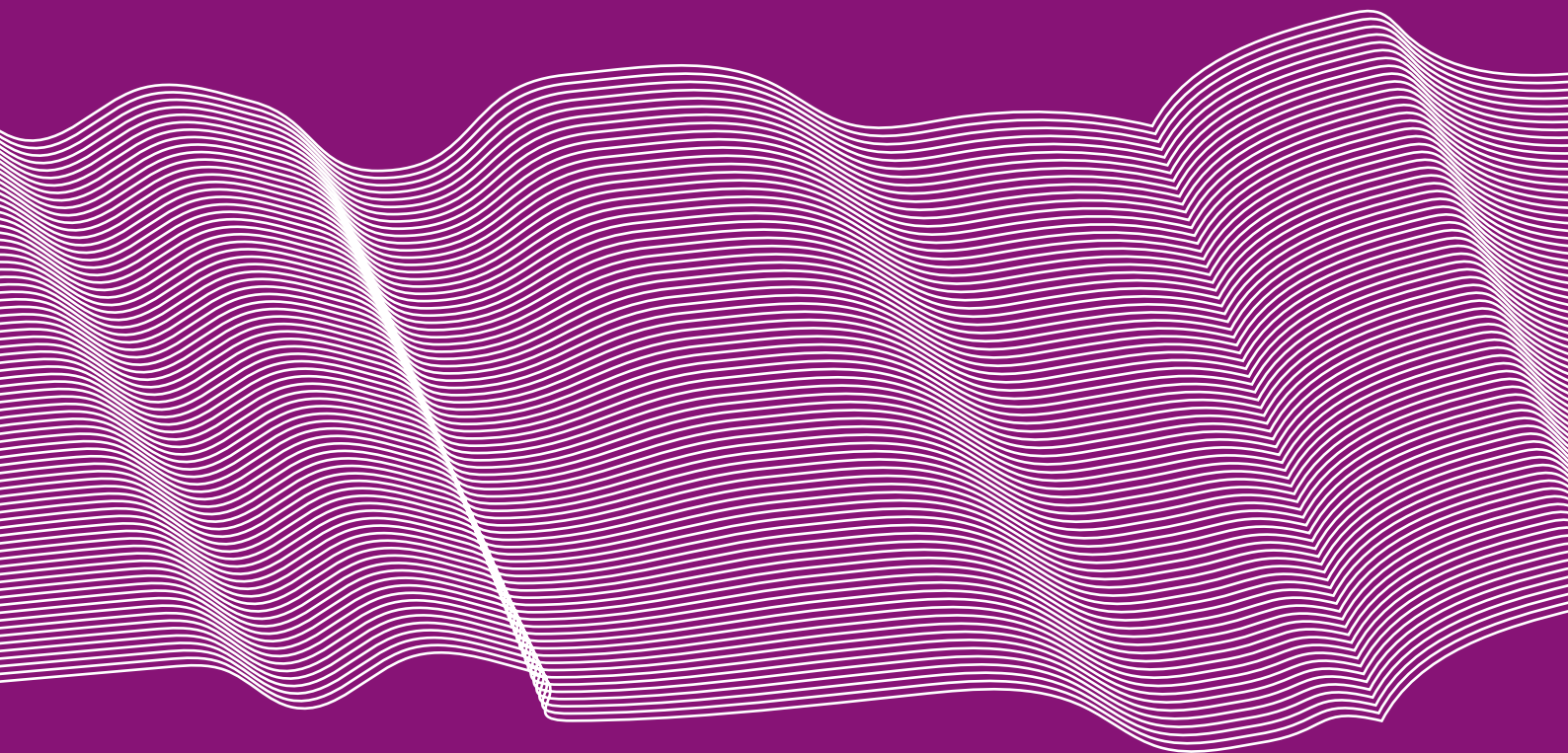
In the Syrian context and its countless variables and crises, we cannot talk about Syrian feminist waves, but rather separate movements at different periods of time in the history of the Syrian state and its general conditions. Syria has witnessed the ongoing demands and struggles for liberation, which were forcibly interrupted during the dictatorial rule, (considered the longest disruption in the life of the Syrian state), which has only recently returned. The Syrian feminist movement is the movement of different generations of women who were able to bring their demands into the spotlight. These generations are linked by their persisting demands to stop the marginalization and exclusion of women, and by emphasizing these demands at every stage. Their chance to claim their rights was linked to the Syrian uprising and its transformation into a war that changed the approach to their demands. As for the possibility of achieving these demands, they will remain related to the outcomes of what is happening politically, and their ability to include their demands as priorities in the desired solutions for Syria.

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Syrian Women's Political movement

Direction

Transverse waves: are the waves in which the ripple is perpendicular to the wave propagation curve and are in the form of tops and bottoms. Transverse waves travel in an elastic medium (such as a solid body, or on the free surface of a liquid) in which there are sufficient cohesive forces between its molecules to enable the vibrating molecule to move its neighbouring ones in a direction perpendicular to the direction of wave propagation.

Lina Wafai writes her vision on the impact of the Syrian Women's Political Movement since its foundation five years ago on the current Syrian feminist wave.



The Syrian Women's Political Movement: An Integral Part of The Syrian Feminist Struggle



Lina Wafai

The Syrian feminist struggle dates back to the period of the Arab Nahda (known as the Arab Awakening) that stretched from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century, coinciding with the first feminist wave happening worldwide. It demanded basic women's rights, including the right to education and voting. Among the pioneers of this time were Maryana Marrash, Mary Ajami, and Adila Bayhum-al-Jazairi.

Although Syrian women gained the right to vote in 1953, they struggled to achieve representation in the government. Despite having the freedom to run for parliament, they were unsuccessful in acquiring the quota of votes needed to enter the parliament due to a patriarchal system that did not recognize them or their abilities.

Women continued their struggle until 1963, when the Ba'ath Party seized power in a military coup. When president Hafez al-Assad came to power in 1970, the party tightened its grip on the Syrian society and controlled every aspect of life, including the unions. The Women's Union was no exception. While women did achieve representation in the parliament, this did not occur through the ballot system but instead through nomination by the Ba'ath party and the way it structured the representation in the parliament. The parliament was a sham, and despite the presence of women, it did not provide any progress in the direction of empowering women and granting them their rights.

Under Hafez al-Assad, all political, union, and civil activity receded, including feminist activism. However, the struggle was not completely extinguished. It persisted in other ways - Some continued their individual feminist cultural work

and writing, such as Maya Al-Rahbi. Others worked through collectives exploiting the slight margins of freedom to improve women's rights, including lobbying to amend the Personal Status Law to protect women's interests and guarantee the right of women to pass on their nationality to their children. The Syrian Women's League is an example of this type of collectives.

Political activism was in no better shape than civil activism. Because of total and generalized oppression, any political activities that were not controlled by the regime were not tolerated and receded. This became more prevalent during the eighties, which witnessed bloody clashes between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood, culminating in the absolute control of the Syrian regime over all aspects of life. As a result, women's active political presence vanished. However, even though women were assigned political roles in ministries and the parliament, their influence remained nominative, just like all other political actors in that period. Women in opposition organizations faced arrest just like their male counterparts. Arrests targeted women affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Communist Labour Party, and the Syrian Communist Party - the Politburo. Women were arrested for a variety of reasons; being party members, providing aid and logistical support to opposition parties, or simply some women were taken as hostages as an act to pressure their husbands or brothers to turn themselves in. Women did not hold decision-making positions in any of the opposition organizations.

Syrian women were on the frontlines when the Syrian revolution broke out in 2011. They were among demonstrators, worked in relief efforts, and participated in coordination. Politically, sometimes women held leadership positions in local coordination committees, and other times they formed their own committees. After militarization, the role of women gradually declined, and their role in military action was very limited or non-existent.

However, the revolution had a significant impact on civil activism and work- a sector women actively participated in. Since the beginning of the revolution, women have been active in the formation of civil society organizations and have created their own feminist and women's organizations. Some of these organizations worked on local levels, while others have expanded broadly to include those living both inside and outside Syria.

These organizations fight for a diverse range of issues. They defend general freedoms, like the right for all Syrians to live in freedom and dignity. And they struggle to promote specific women's rights, including the right to a gender-sensitive constitution that guarantees full equality, empowers women economically, politically, and intellectually, and protects them from gender-based violence (both domestic violence and violence due to war).

These organizations' work falls into the intersectional feminism category, despite defending women's rights that were at the core of the struggles of the second-wave feminism movement, which predated the coining of the term intersectional feminism in 1989. And because the Syrian organizations' work combines the general struggle against political dictatorship and for the freedom of all Syrians with the struggle for Syrian women's rights, these issues overlap, and their influence on Syrian women's lives is intersectional. It is similar to the black feminism intersectionality that combines the struggle of black women for both general racial equality and specific women's rights.

Women's participation in politics after the revolution was not as strong and effective as their civil roles. They were mostly excluded from the political bodies that were established after the revolution to represent its demands. Women's numbers in these bodies remained limited, and they failed to reach the minimum quota they demanded. For instance, in the first Riyadh conference, which was attended by more than one hundred and fifty opposition representatives, the number of women did not exceed ten.

They also faced marginalization within all the other organizations they were part of. They tried to reduce their presence to a mere "decoration" and render their roles ineffective. This led Syrian women to constantly struggle to reach a real and meaningful political participation. This hostile political atmosphere pushed many women away from politics and made them shift their focus entirely to civil work. As a result, the overall rate of women's political participation declined.

In 2017, a group of female political activists and feminists came together to form The Syrian Women's Political Movement (SWPM). SWPM was created as a response to the political marginalization experienced by Syrian women and emphasized that women's rights are indivisible. The movement affirms that women's political rights, including the right to participate, to play effective roles, and to reach decision-making positions, are essential to their right to equality. It considers the political exclusion of women to be part of the violence they are regularly subjected to. One of the examples of how this continuous exclusion affects them is that they were unable to influence the drafting of the constitution and laws that guarantee their rights.

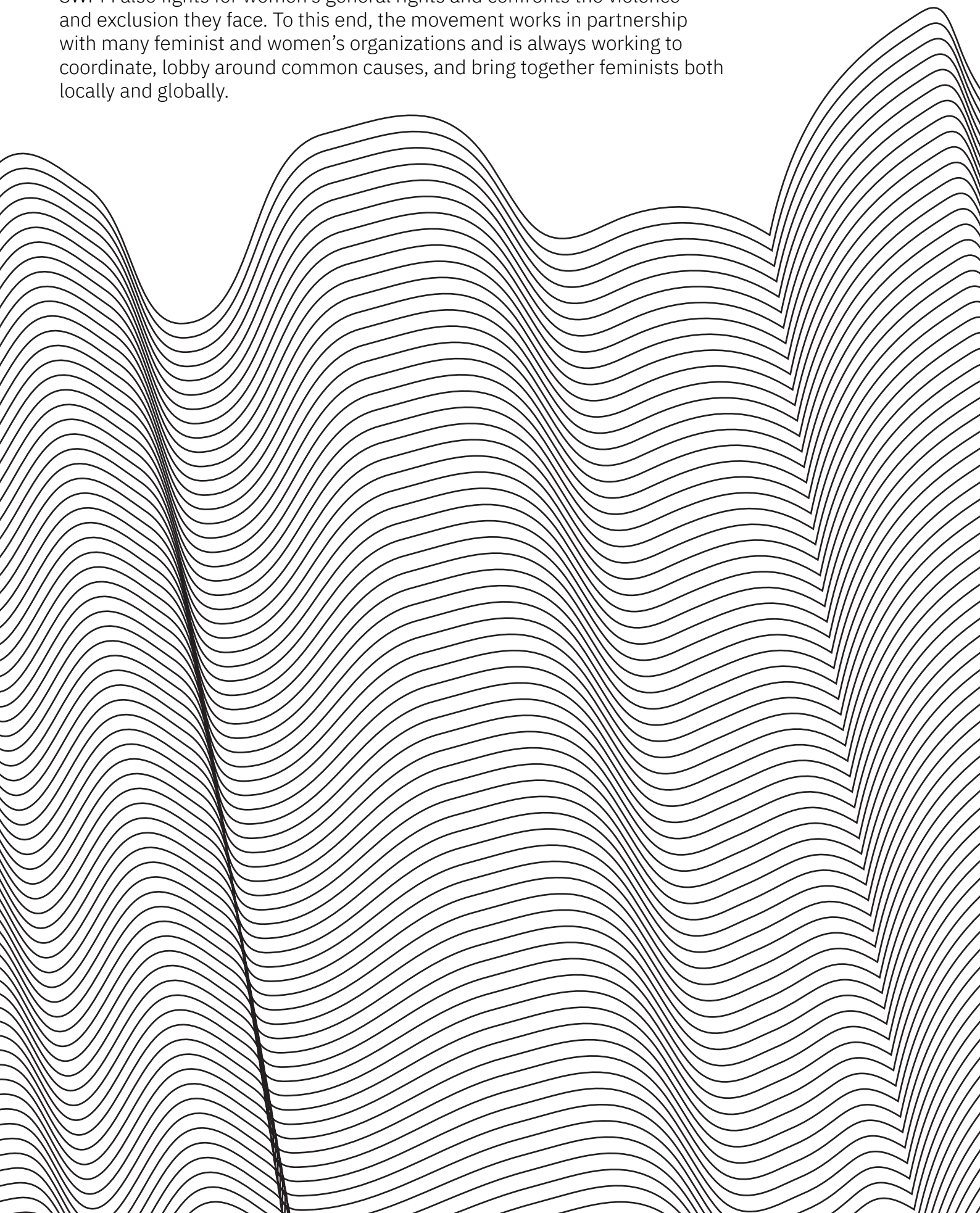
Since its inception, SWPM has worked, in partnership with other Syrian feminist and women's organizations, to defend Syrian women's political and civil rights. It has released several policy papers outlining Syrian women's opinions on various important topics in order to influence and lobby local and international decision-makers to take these opinions and interests into consideration. Women all over Syria, living under the control of various de-facto forces, in areas both inside and outside of the regime's control, were consulted through the National Consultation Program. Each policy paper was written after consultation with approximately one hundred and fifty women.

SWPM is currently working to increase its membership and investing in capacity building to empower its members politically and in the media, and broaden their feminist knowledge, with the goal of cultivating young feminist political leaders. The movement believes in the important role young women play in building the future of Syria and is working to share all previous expertise and transfer it to young activists.

The mission of SWPM is to represent the voices of Syrian women both locally and internationally. It tirelessly emphasizes the demand for the rights of Syrian women, even when these demands have fallen on deaf ears in the past. Amplifying Syrian women's voices nationally and internationally is one of the movement's core tasks.

SWPM sees itself as a part of the Syrian feminist struggle. Its political struggle is feminist as well. It supplements the general struggle with feminist cadres and works to promote women's political rights.

SWPM also fights for women's general rights and confronts the violence and exclusion they face. To this end, the movement works in partnership with many feminist and women's organizations and is always working to coordinate, lobby around common causes, and bring together feminists both locally and globally.



Plurality

Some shapes of quantum particles have wave properties.

In his text, Usama Ashour introduces us to feminist men and feminist gender pluralism



Feminist Men and Gender Pluralism

◆◆ Usama Ashour

1- Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*
<https://n9.cl/wfoe8>

2- Feminism isn't just for women, rather it aims to liberate men from the standards set by society for both genders. If you take a closer look at those standards, you'll find that it forces men to be insensitive so they never show their weaknesses. They are devastating standards for men, while feminism considers that men have the right to be and act however they desire Maghi Van Eyjek. <http://www.studentbeans.com/mag/en/campus/14-misconceptions-about-feminism>

3- Hind Mahmoud and Shaymaa Tantawi, *Nazra for Feminist Studies*
<https://2u.pw/sQrTL>

4- Some activists refuse to refer to men as "feminists" and are determined to refer to all pro-feminist men as "feminism supporters." But most major feminist groups-most notably the National Organization for Women and the American Feminist Majority Foundation - refer to male activists as "feminists" rather than

The Patriarchal System

Whether in the democratic or authoritarian parts of the world, we all live under a patriarchal system where men control fundamental authorities in society, granting them absolute power in both the public and domestic domains. A world that attributes men's dominance in political, economic, and social institutions to their inherited individual capabilities, which are believed to be "lacking in women." Discrepancies between men and women are portrayed as the norm, rather than the exception. Women are thus unable to overcome the various systemic social structures that privilege men, and put them at a disadvantage. The history of patriarchal authority is one of monopolizing knowledge and forming minds according to its ideology. Patriarchy creates a false consciousness that guarantees lasting dominance and imposes a societal image that better serves its interests. The principle of masculine domination is hidden, undetectable, and deceitful. After long-term repeated practice, it has become deeply rooted, common sense, exempt from accountability, and part of the "collective unconscious." ¹

Women's Movement and Feminism

Women's Movement and Feminism converge on their usage of genderized language, representing all women for the benefit of all women. They both refuse to limit and profile women in specific roles. However, what distinguishes feminism is its fight for women's rights while demanding to end the patriarchal gendered hierarchy - that diverts the biological differences between females and males into a material and symbolic hierarchy that serves only men. In addition, feminism rejects "politicizing" women's tragedy and monopolizing the physical and symbolic capital of women's associations by women only. This monopolization is based on the pretext that only women go through adverse experiences of patriarchy, and only they can express them. "Feminism isn't for women only" ² is a feminist slogan seeking a new social system based on equality and human rights, free of violence, conflict, and militarization. ³

Feminist Men

A feminist man ⁴ seeks to uphold the value of equality, renunciate masculinity's privileges, and declare the abolition of injustice against

“feminists supporters.”
<https://n9.cl/bct9o>

5- Abdessamad Dialmy, On Masculine Feminism, Mominoun Without Borders <https://n9.cl/ttctn>

6- It's hard to say there's a consistent standard to see if this man or that woman is a feminist. It is an ongoing and transforming process, and let us remember that a person does not need to have female sexual organs to be a feminist, nor do they need to have male sexual organs to be patriarchal. Alia Ahmed, In Defence of Feminist Men, Doors Magazine. <https://n9.cl/l2t5m>

7- Men and women are different. We have different hormones and different sexual organs and different biological abilities. Men have more testosterone and are – years ago. Because human beings lived then in a world in which physical strength was the most important attribute for survival; the physically stronger person was more likely to lead. And men in general are physically stronger. (There are of course many exceptions.) Today, we live in a vastly different world. The person more qualified to lead is not the physically stronger person. It is the more intelligent, the more knowledgeable, the more creative, more innovative. And there are no hormones for those attributes. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, We Should All Be Feminist. <https://n9.cl/81byv>

8- Pierre Bourdieu, Ibid

women a priority. Feminist men believe in applying feminist principles to their personal lives, learning non-hierarchical patterns, and showing respect in their communication with women. We can observe four different kinds of feminist men: ⁵

- An anti-sexist man
- An anti-patriarchal man
- A pro-feminist man
- A feminist; a man who is actively involved in feminist activism

The concept of a feminist man is still problematic because it begs the following question: can one person simultaneously combine two different perspectives about life (masculine and feminist)? ⁶ I believe it is possible. In fact, “a feminist” is a sound person who can embody a comprehensive and just perspective of the human self. ⁷ The word human holds within it both a man and a woman, both equal in existence, dignity, rights, and opportunities.

Gender Approach and Intersected Identities

Although the biological difference between males and females is relatively fixed, the convictions of societies about the status of men and women vary across cultures. Throughout history, societies have established a set of differences between genders and founded a social system based on the dominance of men over women, and some men’s “dominant masculinity” over other men’s “subordinate masculinity” (Connell, 1987). This gender-organized social system first imposes its domination and violence over women. However, it associates men with violent and cruel behaviors, which is intimidating for most, and breeds domination of men over other men, making “the dominants dominated by their domination.” ⁸

Therefore, gender cannot be captured in one fixed image of a specific category of people, men, who have the power over another category, women. Power discrepancies within each category result from class, sect, race, ethnicity, age, and/or sexual orientation. The intersections of these discrepancies produce multiple masculinities and femininities, and variances in power between each category. This is what distinguishes “gender” from “sex.”

Social equality will only be achieved when we recognize the plurality of sexes, sexualities, and genders identities, such that we aren’t merely left with two perennially clashing categories.

Conclusion

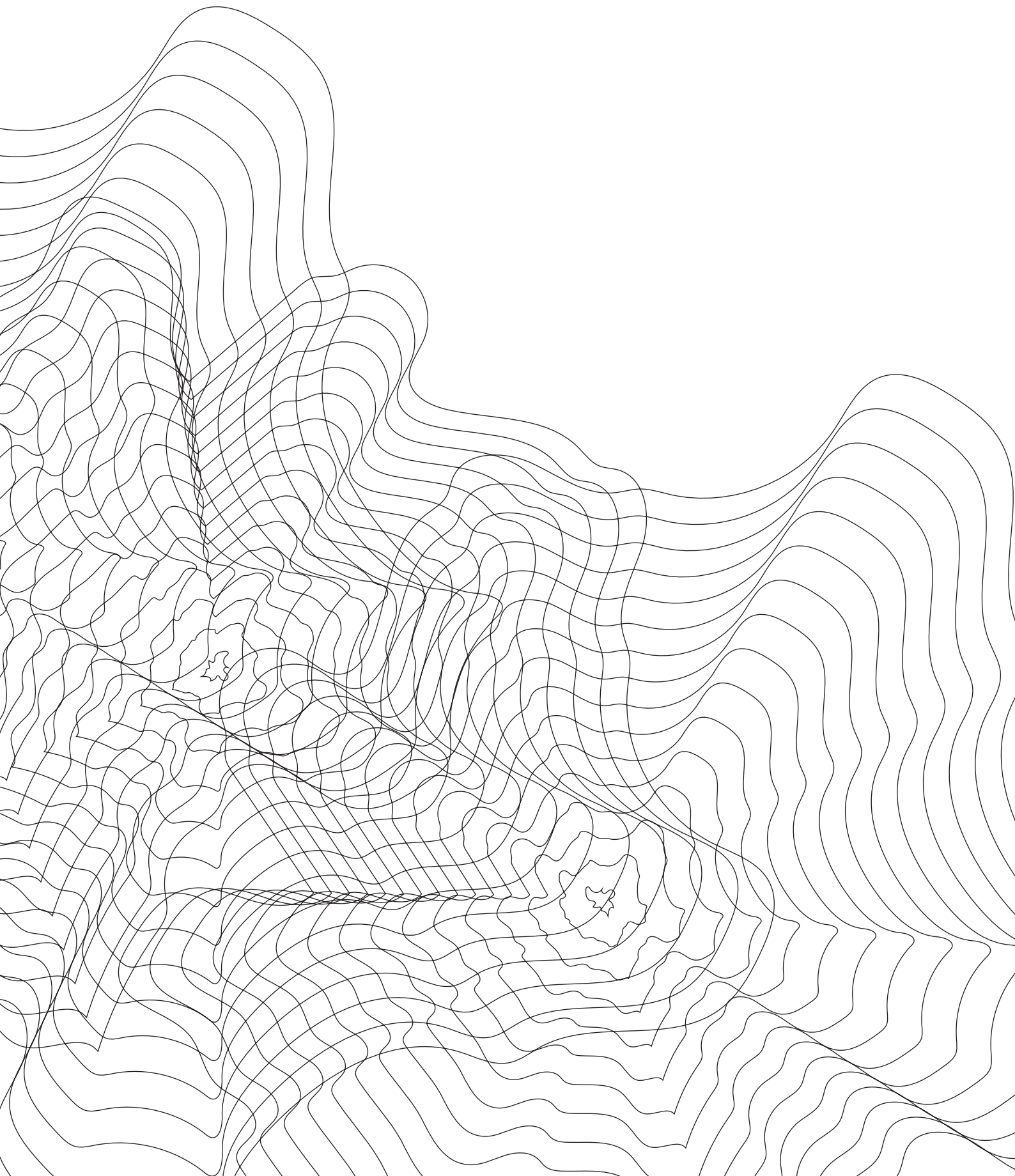
Men’s voluntary involvement in the feminist struggle, out of independent and free conviction, extends new horizons for the feminist movement. Despite the scant numbers of male feminists (which cannot be statistically reflective) their participation in the feminist cause holds “sociological importance.”⁹ It makes it clear that this is not merely a women’s battle. The struggle for rejecting discrimination, preventing violence, and achieving equality, peace, security, and sustainable development, in addition to reproductive rights: abortion, contraception, and sexual freedom does not concern women alone. It

9- Abdessamad Dialmy,
Ibid

10- Chimamanda Ngozi
Adichie, Ibid

is a fight involving both women and men to save both from the negative gendered patterns, lift persecution and injustice, end marginalization, and move from patriarchy to a more humane and just world. «We must all become feminists». **10**

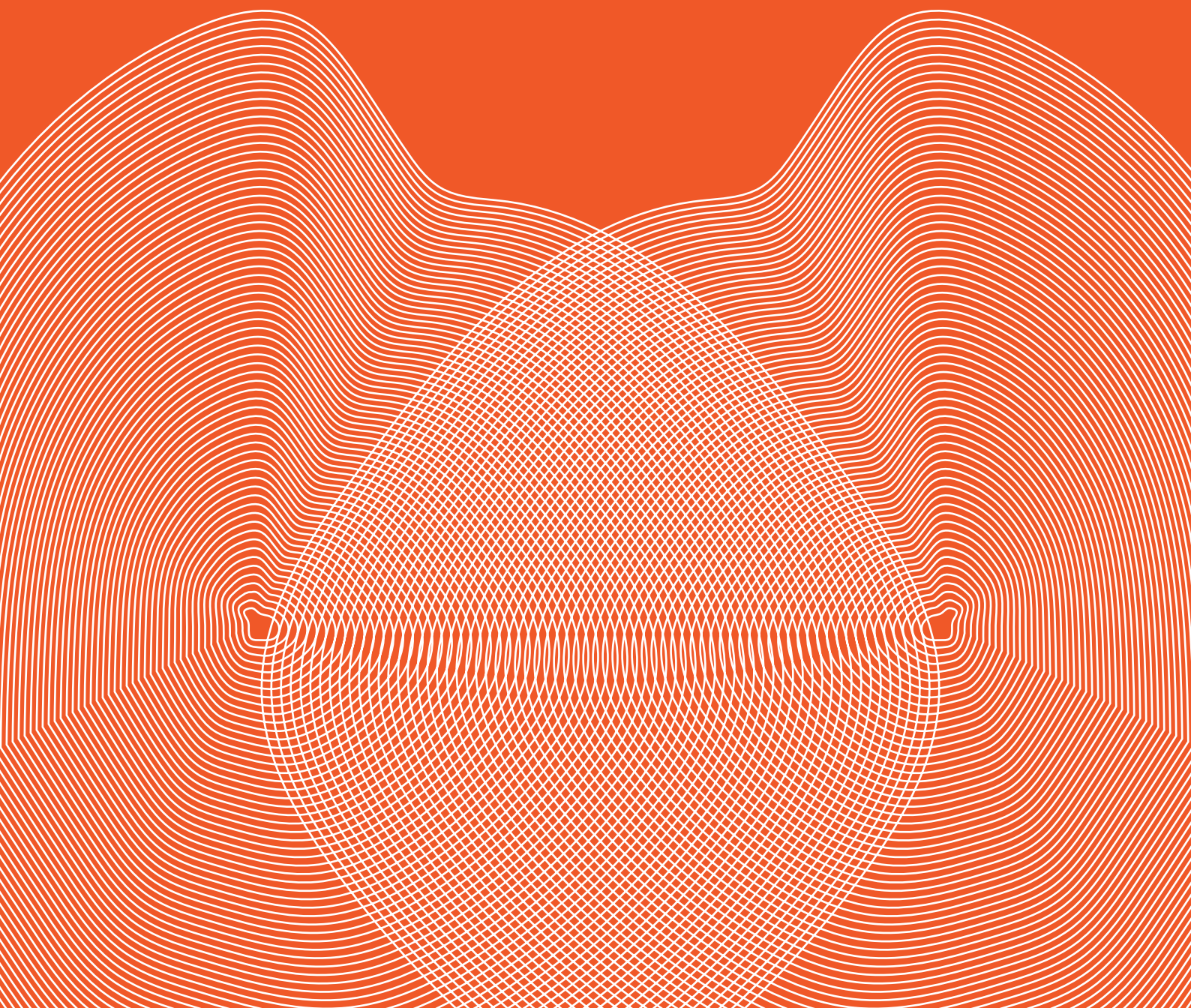
This article expresses the sole opinion of the writer, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Syrian women's political movement



Reflection

The wave has a regular reflection and an irregular reflection. It is a change in the direction of the so-called wave front at an interface separating two media so that the wave front rebounds to the medium from which it originated. One of the beautiful examples of this phenomenon is the reflection of light, sound and waves of water. The laws of regular reflection indicates that the angle at which the wave falls on the surface is equal to the angle at which it is reflected, and the phenomenon of mirrors justifies this reflection.

in their words; The words of the elected leaders in the General Secretariat of the Syrian Women's Political Movement, they reflect the aspirations of its body and celebrate the achievements of its members opening words by Thuraya Hejazi, Khozama Darwish, Suha Alkasir, Ghina Al-Shoumari, Nidal Joujak, Hiam Alchirout



General Secretariat editorial

◆◆ Thuraya Hejazi

Syrian women changemakers

Since its beginning, Syrian women played a strategic role in every aspect of the Syrian revolution. Despite all the catastrophic outcomes, women worked to combine their efforts and expertise in civil organizations and political movements, including the Syrian Women's Political Movement, as an expression of their societal and humanitarian responsibility for their country. Women worked towards achieving their vision of Syria's future through active participation in negotiations, rather than just accepting a consultative role.

Women faced all forms of exclusion and sabotage – society's refusal to accept their leading roles, and the reluctance of political bodies and parties to include women, ignored the importance of their contribution. The bulk of social development efforts are carried out by women, and the success and sustainability of these programs require the effective participation of all groups in society. Women play an essential role in political development and activity, emerging from their interactions within culture and society. Women's role is equal to that of men – they represent an essential force for change. This is why we continue our struggle and accumulate experience, building upon successes and learning from failures, with the aim of having Syrian women involved in every decision-making position in a future Syria, the country of humanity and jasmine.

◆◆ Khozama Darwish

For five long decades, Syrian women had no role in the political and civil activity. However, despite the challenges they faced in every field, they insisted on participating in the Syrian revolution. Women's political, civil, social, and economic struggles started at the beginning of the revolution. But despite all the sacrifices women made, the patriarchy marginalized them politically and forced them exclusively to civil work. Through their insistence on doing political work

and being represented in decision-making roles, Syrian women achieved an initial political presence. They continue to empower women in the political realm while supporting other women's rights and issues.

Political work is a long cumulative journey. Syrian women started this journey 10 years ago, accumulating experiences and joining forces to reach substantive political representation.

◆◆ Suha al-Kasir

Living under a dictatorship and a patriarchal society, women were not able to freely participate in political activity. Many women were detained and tortured and then bullied by society, but despite that, they remained committed to their political activism. Many members of the Syrian Women's Political Movement were detained, or had to confront their patriarchal society, to achieve their goals and dreams.

Despite the countless challenges in political work the Syrian Women's Political Movement achieved a great deal. Since its inception, the movement has worked on empowering women and supporting them in every field.

Our women occupied political roles and participated in political movements, bodies, and organizations where they made important decisions to change the Syrian situation.

Political participation was not available, or even safe, for women. Despite that, many women reached decision-making positions, thus challenging the rules of patriarchal society.

We would not have reached this milestone of freedom without the Syrian feminist movement, which began two centuries ago. And without the many sacrifices these women made, we would not have been able to become decision-makers in many fields.

The Syrian Women's Political Movement faced many obstacles and challenges but was able to achieve presence in many fields, and clear progress in politics. The slogan of our conference (Syrian women change makers) is not mere words, it is an expression of the maturation of our movement's vision. It also represents a decision we took to lead initiatives. Syrian women will be the peacemakers in our devastated country and will spare no effort to achieve decent human life.

◆◆ Ghina al-Shoumari

For us, young women and men, the Syrian revolution represented a great hope to end the status quo and the marginalization we face. Even though the youth were the mainstay of the revolution and its fuel, they were absent from the political scene and are currently politically dormant.

UN reports mention that many opposition entities neglected to create a democratic atmosphere that would enable young women and men to rise up the organizational and administrative ladder. In addition, the prevalence of

corruption and nepotism in some of these entities played an undeniable role in this context. This caused Syrian politics to prematurely age, prompting the Security Council to issue Resolution 2250 in 2015, which called on all actors related to the Syrian cause to consider increasing the representation of youth, when negotiating peace agreements. However, the representation of young women and men in the negotiation process's various political frameworks, (as an example, but not limited to the Syrian case), does not exceed 10% at best, even though this age group represents more than a quarter of Syrians.

The challenges facing young women politicians are twice that of young men, as all the challenges related to gender intersect with the general preconception that sees young people as lacking in experience and knowledge. This pushed youth towards civil work and away from engaging in political work, despite its importance.

In the Syrian Women's Political Movement, we firmly believe that political work can not be effective without embracing those young women and men who believe in political feminism and improve on it by employing their progressive tools. We do not see youth as mouthpieces, but rather consider them decision-makers. We work towards developing programs to encourage young women to engage in political activity. Such programs include a political mentoring program, the Young Women Politicians Forum, and many other political activities that represent the core of political and feminist activism.

With their ideas and trends, young blood and new faces need the experience and political wisdom of previous generations, just as much as they need to adopt a discourse that reflects their aspirations for openness and change. This requires years of cumulative work to reach the degree of active participation, which highlights the importance of opening new channels of communication and collaboration between the older and new generations. We also need to keep pushing all international and local parties to support youth initiatives and contribute to enabling their effective participation at the civil and political levels, so that they can play an active part in the process of change and democratic transformation of the future Syrian state.

I speak today as a young member of the Syrian Women's Political Movement's General Secretariat. I deeply appreciate the support and the democratic atmosphere the movement provides, which will assist the emergence of a new generation of young Syrian women politicians. This new generation will play an essential role in building a new political vision, with less rigid and repetitive discourses. Making these outdated discourses obsolete will represent an effective way to push back against the face of a culture where tyranny has been enforced for decades as the culture of eternal authority.

Nidal Joujak

The General Secretariat, a personal experience in political work
Women have participated in the Syrian political struggle since the beginning, and the Syrian Women's Political Movement formed as an extension of this struggle. The movement was born out of necessity, to encourage women's political participation, and strengthen their roles in political processes, especially after the 2011 revolution.

The Syrian Women's Political Movement formed despite all the challenges women faced, and still face today, and as a result of women's tenacity and

insistence to have political representation and play decision-making roles. Personally, I had the honor of being a part of the Movement and participating in political activity through it, and as a member of its General Secretariat.

As for difficulties with the leading group, work that relied on virtual communication was a daunting task, since it was a totally new experience. Institutional civil work with political content is also a new experience, and the feminist nature of political work is still not yet crystallized. This is not surprising given that we grew up in a male-dominated environment.

Despite all that, this experience proved useful in many international contexts and demonstrated the importance of organized and purposeful teamwork, even without a director, general secretary, or head of the movement, as in other political organizations. The responsibility for mistakes and differences is shared by all members and transforms into experiences that constitute added value to our collective feminist political work, all of which will be passed on to future generations and built upon.

Through this experience, I see feminist activism moving towards highlighting and consolidating the role of women in political activism, a butterfly effect in leading change. We need more serious initiatives to engage in those political circles that still intimidate some, as a result of taboos imposed on the presence of women in them.

Hiam Alchirout

To the Syrian women who suffered greatly during the past eleven years, and still suffer until this moment. Syrian women, who became role models, and who suffered the most due to the harsh conditions they faced. I salute with honor and appreciation those women who marched on the frontlines, from the beginning of the revolution until today. They fearlessly raised their voices crying out for freedom. Syrian women were collectively active in the time of war while facing all forms of atrocities in detention centers and in refugee camps, at the hands of the Assad regime.

Syrian women continue to strive to play leadership roles throughout the country, and in the political processes led by the United Nations. They made vital contributions to humanitarian aid and peacemaking efforts, in addition to health care and education.

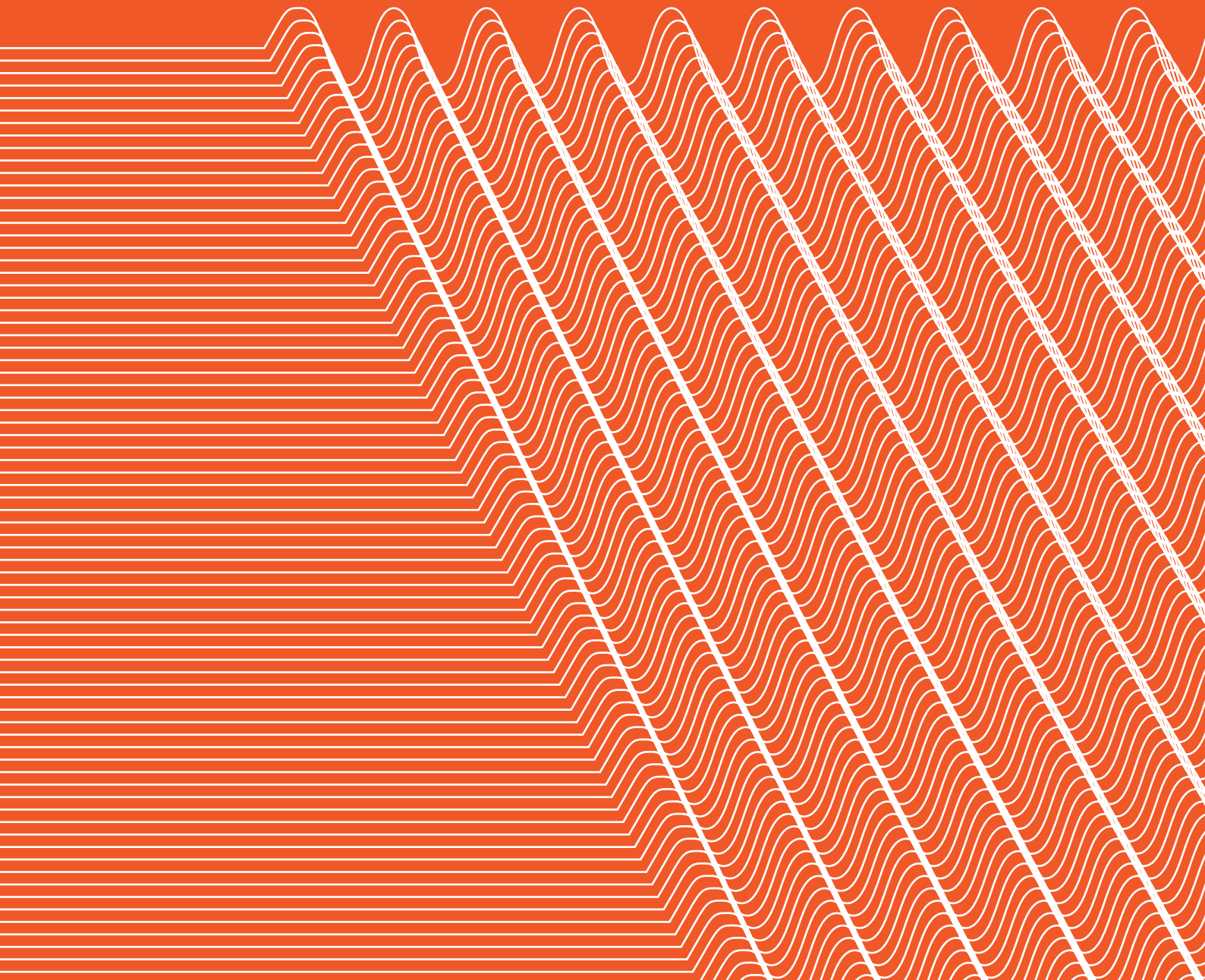
The future of Syria depends on active women in all areas of life, and this requires equal rights and opportunities. Therefore, we call on the international community to preserve the dignity of women, their safety, and protection from rape, deprivation, murder, violence, and all the dire conditions Syrian women face and support them in gaining their rights from the brutal Syrian regime.

I am proud of what Syrian women are doing to show their ability to lead, and continue to bring peace to a new Syria.

Transition

If we hold a rope and move its tip, we will notice the occurrence of mechanical waves that transfer energy from one place to another without necessarily displacing the particles of the medium, that is, no mass is transmitted with the wave, but the particles of the medium move perpendicular to or parallel to the direction of the wave's movement around a fixed location.

In one question addressed to the movement's founders (Basma Kodmani, Joumana Seif, Kholoud Mansour, Dima Moussa, Rouba Mhaisen, Rowaida Kanaan, Saba Hakim, Fardous Al-Bahra, Lina Wafai, Marie-Thérèse Kiriaky, Mariam Jalabi, Muzna Dureid, and Wejdan Nassif), we follow the forms of transmission of the feminist wave over time, and the expression of its political vision during the five years since its foundation and today.





An interview with the founders

“An initiative led by brave women, who wanted to confront the contradictions of a society based on practices that impede women’s opportunities and equal political participation, in addition to anti-woman practices of marginalization and social exclusion. This initiative aims to build the future of Syria and Syrian women, through a political solution that guarantees a unified democratic country, spanning all its territory and including all its people. This initiative represents a step among others in feminist and political struggles.”



From Fardous Albahra’s speech on the establishment of the Syrian Women’s Political Movement, in the first general assembly of the movement.

I would like to emphasize that we, as women, need to expand the concept of politics and political action and work. Politics involves public affairs, education policies, healthcare, women’s status, child protection, and every aspect of a human’s life. All work related to these public issues is political, especially in the transitional stage we are hoping to reach in the future.

We need to work constantly on breaking the barriers between what’s political and what’s not. Public affairs, participation in a local council, and participation in a feminist organization are considered political work. Even civil society activism is political work.

We need to develop political work as general policies on the local and central levels. We need to expand the concept of politics to enable every Syrian citizen to participate in building a strong Syria, for all Syrian women and men.



Excerpts from Dr. Bassma Kodmani’s presentation during a Political Forum session entitled, “The Feminist Role in Syrian Reality from the Perspective of Feminists Inside Syria, approaches and messages during her last visit to Syria”.



Joumana Seif

You are a Syrian legal advisor and human rights activist. You were a part of the Damascus Declaration and other Syrian initiatives for freedom before it. You currently work with the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights ECCHR on accountability.

Women are often described as peacebuilders, especially in a conflict context. What's your view on this statement? Does it carry any misconceptions as a justice activist?

I totally agree. Not from the traditional view of women as weak emotional “doves of peace”, but from the perspective that sees women as powerful and informed. Women are often closer to their community, thus they are more able to recognize problems, solve them, and include the solutions as part of a political process towards a lasting and comprehensive peace. Many countries that have experienced armed conflicts have proven that although women face both violence and discrimination, they always try to advance themselves and their communities, and work on improving societal peace. Syrian women have proved this over the past ten years through their efficiency and effectiveness, engaging in political, economic, and rights issues, recognizing problems and solving them, and representing the voices of women and communities locally and internationally. As a human rights activist, I do not see any misconception in this discourse. Rwandan women who worked on documenting crimes, accountability mechanisms, and rehabilitating society after witnessing the horrors of war and genocide have proven to be real peacemakers, and true representatives of the people in democratic elections.



Dima Moussa

You are a lawyer, politician, and women's rights activist. You work with the Institute of Human Rights Law at DePaul University with a focus on Arab women's rights. You also engaged with Syrian activists in the Syrian revolution, as the spokesperson of Homs revolutionary council. You later joined the National Council as a founding member, to be elected as the vice president of the Syrian opposition coalition. You

are a member of the Syrian Constitutional Committee and a co-founder of the Syrian women's political movement. In your struggle, you remained close to the revolution on the ground while having a presence in the most prominent political decision-making platforms on Syria.

What are your recommendations for bridging the gap between the revolution on the ground and the political opposition platforms? What trust-building mechanisms would you suggest to unify efforts?

Through my experience in public affairs over the past ten years, I've learned that people need honest and transparent communication, not slogans, rhetoric and diplomacy, or saying what people want to hear. People want to hear the truth. They want to feel that their voices are heard and that those who have access to platforms will sincerely represent their voices and demands.

Communication in the Syrian context is not necessarily direct, as Syrians are scattered all over the world. Even inside Syria, some areas are not accessible at the moment. Thus, we should use all available means of communication to engage in honest constructive dialogues. Personally, I do not consider "unifying efforts", in the sense of adopting the same views, as what we need. Our end goal is political pluralism, meaning diversity of political opinions, visions, and approaches.

However, common factors can be utilized to build trust, through the exchange of views and information. In addition, we need to intensify efforts to communicate with marginalized groups, who have less access or representation in political bodies.



Rouba Mhaissen

You hold a BA in Economics from the American University of Beirut, a MA in Economic Development, and a Ph.D. in Economics from SOAS University in London.

You are known for your commitment to searching for meaning not only through your academic work, but also by constantly asking the big questions and converting your words into daily action.

We all remember the conclusion of your speech “Speak to us, not about us, not in our name” at the end of the Conference on Helping Syria and the Region, which the press considered embarrassing to the international community, and Ban Ki-moon who was listening at the time.

You worked with Lebanese refugees in Syria, and then with Syrian refugees in Lebanon. This paradox reflects the existential challenges experienced by human rights workers. As the founder and director of Sawa for Development and Relief, what are the mechanisms that you suggest for persistence in this strenuous work, despite the harsh daily reality in our region?

I believe that the stamina and strength of anyone who wants to work for a more just world, a nation built on strong principles of citizenship, and a community where everyone lives in dignity set the right intention for the work we are trying to do. Believing that it is an honor to serve, and having a strong sense of purpose that is clear for everyone involved, is crucial. It is also important to build a powerful community or team around you, with whom you can set objectives collectively. Creating a culture where everyone on the team believes that those who we are supporting are not only humans but our own families and communities and that any of us could have been in that place, helps to ensure our work is always guided by values. Surround yourself with the right people, people who will help you not lose the direction of your work, and who will inspire you in your darkest times. It is crucial to remember that we are working towards a cause, especially when one sees the sacrifices and continuous bravery of our people. We can not lose hope, or our work will become a mere job.



Rowaida Kanaan

You are a native of Wadi Barada, with its waters that irrigate Damascus, and a graduate of the Faculty of Science - Department of Mathematics. Your political rebellion began in your university years. The Student Union office summoned you for investigation, for fraternizing with associates of the Communist Labor Party, and Arab students from Sudan and Yemen. Your activism continued with your involvement in the Syrian revolution.

You were detained three times. One of the charges against you was “establishing political parties that aim to change the constitution” after your political activity was no longer limited to demonstrations only, but also as a co-founder of the “Together for a Free and Democratic Syria” movement. After you moved to France, you performed in the play “X Adra”, which discussed the situation of women detainees, directed by the Syrian director “Ramzi Shukair”. You were also a reporter for “Rozana” radio and presented a number of radio programs, the most important of which is “Darkness of the Dungeon”, a program for women, “Half of the World” and a segment “Freedom Bus”.

You’ve always fought for the freedom of speech and stuck to your political position and voice. Do you still believe that speaking truth to power is worth that price? And why?

Always and forever, speaking the truth is worth that and more, because, without it, humanity will not progress.

The issue does not only concern me and my generation, it concerns humanity and future generations. If we stop one day, what we struggle against will become the norm, and future generations will live in oppression and enslavement. Struggles for human rights issues and societal changes do not achieve their goals overnight. What changed for me is being outside the country, so my struggle has taken on another form. It is sometimes satisfying, and other times frustrating. I always feel responsible for those who remained in Syria, and that others will pay the price for what we started.

I still believe in the right of every human being to live in their country with dignity and freedom, in a state of law that respects all its citizens without any form of discrimination. I became more convinced that women (feminists) should attain decision-making positions, which will lead to positive change for the rights of women and all vulnerable groups in society.



Kholoud Mansour

You are a researcher specializing in the development and refugee affairs. You have previously worked on the national consultation project in the Syrian Women's Political Movement, and are one of its founders. Your contribution to the movement was adding an academic aspect to the political work that the movement provides through periodic papers and publications. You are known for your accuracy and efforts to merge scientific methodology in the work. Do you agree that scientific research is one of the most important tools of political action? Do you link its adoption as a technical reference to a broader influence on political decisions?

س

Certainly, I consider scientific research an essential tool for political action. Scientific research enables the Syrian Women's Political Movement to be part of knowledge production, to accumulate this production constructively, and help influence political decisions. Scientific research may often be accused of "neutrality" or its inability to directly present political visions, ideas, approaches, and opinions. However, scientific research's ability to be a methodological and objective tool that supports and serves political and feminist work and the Syrian cause is underestimated, and the real impact it could have on the political track and related decisions is also overlooked.

Having knowledge is a source of strength, especially when the process of collecting and generating knowledge is carried out efficiently, and with material, human and technical readiness, in addition to working on managing the knowledge base and facilitating its use to be applied to serve political action. There may also be some focus on separating political work from scientific research or civil work, but working on these pillars in an integrated and systematic manner offers qualitative steps forward in political decision-making.



Saba Hakim

You worked as a pharmacist before the revolution. You were also a volunteer with an association caring for people with special needs. When detentions began, you were among the delegation that went to the governor of Idlib to demand the release of detainees. What is your definition of courage today, ten years after the revolution?

After the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in March 2011, as a result of decades of oppressive and tyrannical rule, we witnessed the heroic actions of many women and men at the political, media, medical, relief, and legal levels, to bring down the corrupt dictatorial regime. We lived through difficult times, as the regime responded with extreme violence, arrest, and torture. Yet, most of the Syrian women and men remained committed to their demands and rights.

Despite the difficulties, many women and men entered the field of political activism, astonishing observers with the level of courage they displayed.

Many associations, bodies, parties, and political movements emerged with the aim of reaching political transition and a state of law, justice, democracy, and equality. However, working in public affairs and politics under these difficult conditions was extremely demanding. Politicians need courage, cunning, responsibility, intelligence, boldness, and charisma because they must take decisive and quick decisions without hesitation, sometimes dangerous decisions with consequences that affect the entire country and its population.

Courageous decision-making is necessary to address important issues and reach sound solutions. Courage is not limited to specific patterns of human behavior such as carrying arms and waging battles, it also includes various forms of moral, professional, intellectual, and political courage.

Courage cultivates the ability to face fear and make tough decisions.

Many who have amazing abilities and talents miss the opportunity to achieve greatness because they become crippled by fear. Fear of failure must be overcome with constant work, training, and gaining new skills and experience. Courage must go hand in hand with morals. Daring to commit injustice, aggression, and rudeness is not courage, because moral courage obligates a person to fight for truth, values, and moral principles, and to abide by the laws to protect them.

Syrian women's engagement in political work requires a courageous decision, due to the difficulties, consequences, and challenges that this entails. However, the courage of Syrian women and their groundbreaking work in the political sphere, during one of the worst periods of Syria's history, demonstrates their strength, intelligence, and patriotism. As Aristotle says: "Courage is not to say what you believe, but to believe in everything you say."



Lina Wafai

You are a leftist feminist political activist, and one of the first to demand for equal citizenship. You are also one of the architects of the National Consultations Project, carried out by the Syrian Women's Political Movement, conducting political consultations inside Syria and neighboring countries with nearly 500 women, and collecting policy recommendations that are the current priority of Syrian women and men. You have been persecuted, and even imprisoned. Despite that, you never gave up fighting for what you believe in, and you inspire many with your passion, persistence, and determination. What is the source of your everlasting fire, Lina?

Since 1980 (the year I became interested in public affairs), Syria has witnessed many changes, ups, and downs. Throughout these years, Syria was subjected to extensive oppression and tyranny, and the interest of Syrian women and men in public affairs often declined, until finally, the Syrian revolution erupted.

Before the revolution, this question always loomed over us, "What is the use of working under these circumstances?", especially after the regime ended the phenomenon of forums and quashed the Damascus Spring. But soon the Syrian revolution began, and hope for change returned. This hope lasted for years but quickly declined after the revolution turned into a brutal war that crushed all Syrians, inside Syria and in the camps, and in places of displacement and asylum.

Here it was necessary to self-reflect, and that was what I did. Because I believe rights can't die, even if the path is long; work does not always yield instant results, and we must always work for the future of our children and grandchildren. What happened did not discourage me from continuing the struggle and striving for the dream. I dream of a state of citizenship for all its women and men, a state that respects Human rights, and ensures full and equal rights for women.



Marie Therese Kiriaky

You were born in Damascus and have lived in Austria since the late eighties.

You worked in UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in 1987, and

were involved in its programs. You are also the director of the Balsam project, which deals with Syrian refugee children and women from 2011 to date. You received the award of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, for voluntary work for the same Balsam project in 2015. You are a co-founder of the Arab Forum and the Arab Human Rights Organization in Austria, in addition to your commitment as a writer and editor-in-chief of Balsam magazine, issued by the Austrian Arab Women's Association in Austria, that you are currently the president of.

As an Arab woman living in Austria in Central Europe, one of the first countries in granting women their political rights, what do you have in common with the women of Austria?

We must emphasize that some challenges are faced by women all over the world, at all levels of life and rights. We share similar goals, as we are part of the global women's struggle; there are many overlapping objectives, problems and demands.

It should be noted that the rights women enjoy in Austria have brought us closer to gaining our legitimate rights, which we are still in the early stages of demanding in our countries of origin, such as education, work, safety, dignity, etc.

We should realize that our society is not singular, but it is composed of multiple societies. Women in each society live a distinct reality, and therefore my condition as a person cannot be measured and generalized in comparison with other women in these societies. I belong to a society where women have somewhat greater rights than women in other communities. The most important rights that women enjoy in this society is the right to education, which is a gateway to understanding reality, and a motive for demanding human rights and basic needs.

Do you feel alienated or distant from them despite being a citizen for a long time?

Having many identities made me more receptive and integrated into this host community. I have never had to search for a personal identity in all its forms, religious or national. Most importantly, my personal feeling is that I am not better than the other, and that the other is no better than me. All of that kept me from feeling alienated. Of course, this does not mean that I do not sometimes miss, or rather yearn, for some intimate details.

You might be surprised if I told you I sometimes felt alienated when I was visiting my homeland. After many years, I feel time in Syria has stood still, or even regressed decades..



Mariam Jalabi

You were born in Damascus, lived in Quneitra until your teenage years, and moved between many cities, in each of which you strived to acquire knowledge, and went through many professional and human experiences.

Today, you are the representative of the Syrian Opposition Coalition to the United Nations in New York, where you live.

The name of Quneitra, which means “little bridge”, inspired my question. It was a cultural crossing throughout history, and for Syrians, it bears the symbolism of the occupied and perhaps impossible border city.

Today, as a Syrian political leader, you are working on a global scale. What is your recommendation to overcome the barriers of impossibility and build “bridges” and alliances so that Syrian women reach decision-making positions?

The most important lesson I have learned is that females are not welcome in public spaces. This discrimination is not specific to a geographic location, religion, race, civilization, or culture. Rather, it is a global matter entrenched in every aspect of our lives. I found that salvation stems from solidarity, cooperation, and building bridges with everyone who has deep awareness that this discrimination represents an obstacle for all of humanity, not only for females.

So, I tend to work in spaces where bridges can be built in collaboration with other women, to break discriminatory concepts against women or any other human groups, so that the world becomes more just and humane. At the same time, I work on the collective level by being part of spaces founded on justice and equality, to bring the largest number of women to decision-making positions.

My advice to all my comrades to establish our presence in the public space is that each of us work to build partnerships with others we trust and who have the same deep belief in the power of justice and equality, and the ability to support each other on a feminist basis.

All my strength comes to me from the strength of the women around me.



Muzna Dureid

You are the youngest co-founder of the movement. You have a long rich experience in relief and feminist work, and you are the member who raised her voice to support the voices of young women. Today, the movement launched the Young Women Politicians Forum, which seeks to improve their leadership skills in order to reach political participation. What do you think are the contributions that young women bring to political work, and what is the importance of supporting their presence in public affairs?

Young women play many roles, most importantly, they transfer knowledge and feminist work across generations, politically and organizationally represent women in exile through the full integration of young women into Western and Syrian parties, and transfer scientific and practical knowledge of the Syrian issue. In addition, young women play an important role by working at the intersections; developing a new political vision for Syria that relies on solving the problems of the contemporary generation, such as digital security, climate issues, justice, energy, and food security through the youth agenda, youth, peace and security (Resolution 2250), and security, peace and women (Resolution 1325) and other supplementary agreements.



Wejdan Nassif

In March 2012, you began writing letters under the pen name “Jumana Maarouf”, trying to answer the urgent question about how the Syrian street is moving in relation to the revolution. You later published these letters under your real name in the series of Syrian testimonies published by Bayt al-Muwatin. You still play the role of witness and messenger through the National Consultations Project, where you have a dialogue with its team of approximately 500 Syrian women annually.

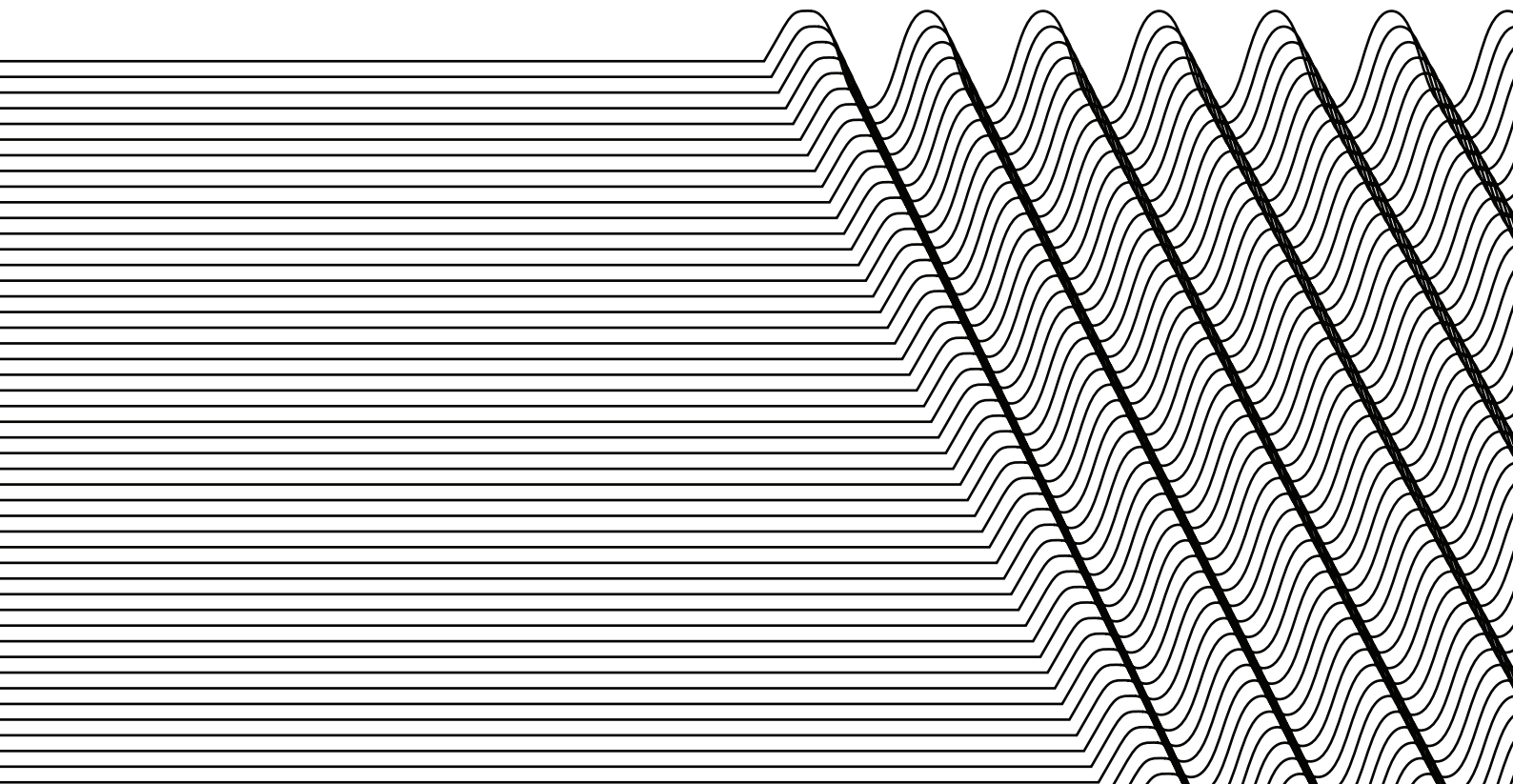
What do you think is the importance of testimonies and messages in the time of the revolution?

My work on documenting testimonies started by chance. In June 2011, I went with a group of friends to a funeral tent in Barza Al-Balad, as part of our activity as a social committee in the “Syrian Women in Support of the Syrian Uprising”. That day, the father of one of the five martyrs entered the tent and spoke to us, thinking that we were journalists. He said: “Please write...Write the story of our children so that it is not forgotten.” Then he sat down and told us the story of his martyred son. That evening I started writing — listening to people and relaying their stories became my mission and passion.

In “Letters from Syria” I documented my diaries and my observations of Damascus, which began to change after the revolution turned into a violent war. I conveyed people’s conversations, discussions, and points of view, which began to vary greatly and often differ sharply.

The consultative sessions do not depart from this context. Listening to the various groups of women, documenting their stories and experiences, and consulting with them constitutes an opportunity for all of us, as Syrian women, to meet on a common ground that brings us together, despite our different locations and experiences.

The consultative sessions, for me, and before they were a program to convey women’s voices to decision-makers and formulate their views on thorny political files through policy papers, is a long-term project to build bridges of communication between us. It is a tool to resist the barriers and walls of isolation and division imposed on us, resisting silence through speaking, and fighting forgetfulness, marginalization, and one-sided narratives.



In memory of Walaa Ahmadu.

Our work in the Syrian women's political movement enables us as women to know the political orientation and outcome of negotiations, and enables us to draw on the experiences of veteran women politicians. It also works to provide the movement with young energies from inside Syria, not as victims, but as experts who understand the nature of women and the nature of violence practiced against them. They understand the needs of women and of society during the war, and the changes required for the next stage.



Spread

Electromagnetic waves propagate in a vacuum, without the need for a physical medium. Light, radio waves, X-rays, and gamma rays are examples of them. One of the characteristics of these physical waves is that they propagate at the speed of light estimated at 300,000,000 meters per second.

In an interview conducted by Warda Al-Yassin with members of the Syrian women's political movement present and widespread in Syria, (Salma Al-Dimashqi, Sahar Hawija, Shams Antar, Kawthar Qashkoush, Malina Zaid), we learn about six stories from the movement's frontline.

Stories from the field



The interviews were conducted by Warda al-Yassin, a member of the Syrian Women's Political Movement

Driven by our belief in women's essential role in creating political and social change, we captured snapshots depicting the struggle of a few members of the Syrian Women's Political movement, inside Syria. We conducted our interviews with a focus on their political, social, human rights work and most importantly on their struggle to achieve an established role for Syrian women in various political and social fields. We discussed the ways they face security, social, and economic challenges to highlight the vital role women play in social, civil, and political activity.

◆◆ Salma al-Dimashqi

“The most important steps we need to take on our way to achieve equality include changing discriminatory laws in addition to addressing traditions, false religious concepts, and popular proverbs entrenched in every aspect of our lives”, says Salma al-Dimashqi, an activist in the Syrian Women’s Political Movement, living inside Syria. Salma’s first confrontation with society was taking off the hijab, enforced on her by the patriarchal society. Salma says: “My struggle to achieve equality started when I was a teenager. My family forced me to wear a hijab and left no space for discussion. I had to wear it until I graduated from university, that’s when I had to face a society with various intersecting factors related to traditions, religion, and the patriarchy.” Salma continues: “Later, as a woman working as a civil servant, I had to make double the effort to get equal opportunities in training abroad.”

Things changed in 2011, as women increased their participation in civil and human rights activism, in addition to humanitarian work. As Salma explains, “after 2011, as women entered the field of civil activity, feminist organizations demanding gender equality, rapidly started to emerge.” Salma shares her experience: “After 2011, I started working with women in humanitarian relief. This field represented an opportunity to meet many groups of marginalized women, who did not even know what their rights were. We later established an organization concerned with women’s issues and held many courses for women. These courses focused on the intellectual empowerment of women in all aspects of life after displacement, such as legal protection, rent deeds, custody of their children, and feminist and gender concepts. We also launched many campaigns on issues such as child marriage, sexual harassment, stereotypes of divorced women or women past the traditional age of marriage, and other issues.”

◆◆ Shams Antar

“The feeling that my brother and I were treated differently made me resent my gender, and wish I were a boy! I thought boys were superheroes, able to do whatever they wanted. At the end of high school, I clearly saw the injustice women suffered, and realized that women can compete with men, and accomplish anything they set their minds to, when they have the will and full knowledge about their rights as independent human beings.” Shams started our interview with this.

Shams was born in Amouda and lives in Qamishli. She has a B.A. in Education and wrote many social and political articles in the local Kurdish newspapers. After 2011, she published five collections of short stories. Most of her stories address the struggle of women, especially Kurdish women who face intersecting discrimination for their gender and ethnicity. Shams still advocates on various issues concerning women.

“Recruiting underaged girls in SDF-controlled areas is an injustice to both the mothers and their underaged daughters. I decided to be their voice because the security apparatuses rule with an iron fist, especially in the issue of recruiting minors. There is almost no media coverage of this issue, and parents are too afraid to raise their voices for their children”, explained Shams, who started organizing sit-ins against minors’ recruitment.

Despite all the attempts to disperse sit-ins and ban them, in addition to the violence, threats, and insults Shams faced at the hands of the women's Asayish forces, she refused to give up. She took the cause to TV channels and raised the issue.

"Even though I was terrified at the time, I presented the stories of these girls, along with documentation and evidence, to local and international media. We are currently documenting the names of the minors recruited, with the aim of taking these documents to the UN, hoping it will play a role in bringing an end to this issue in our areas."

Kawthar Qashqush

Kawthar has been active in civil, human rights, humanitarian and political issues since 2011. She considers empowering Syrian women, especially those inside Syria, to gain their full rights and reach decision-making roles, the most essential issue.

She is from Al-Bab city in Aleppo and a member of its local council. She also works with Al-Bab coordination council as an editor and in documenting bombings and violations. Kawthar started our interview with: "I dropped out of university in 2013 due to the regime's persecution, because I participated in the peaceful demonstrations. I kept on working in al-Bab while it was under IS control, between 2014 and 2017. I document IS's violations against civilians, especially women and children. After IS's defeat, I gained a seat in the local council as a secretary and a member of the legal committee, from 2017 until this day."

According to Kawthar, her motivation to participate in political work and advocate for women's rights stems from her personal struggles. She recounts: "The reign of IS over al-Bab was a bleak time for all civilians, especially women. IS denied women all their rights including education and work. I know women, who were detained and tortured in IS prisons for participating in the Syrian revolution, demanding freedom or breaking IS's oppressive laws. My childhood best friend was one of those women. IS regressive practices spread fear and terror among the people, and perpetuated negative views on women."

Kawthar continues: "After the IS's defeat, local governance institutions were established, opening doors for women's participation. These institutions are seen as training opportunities for women to play more effective roles. In addition, women's participation in the council plays an essential role in providing better services to all civilians, of both genders. All of that motivated me and pushed me to be active in public affairs, decision making, and political activity."

Kawthar says: "Women inside Syria, who chose to advocate women's rights, and human rights in general, face many challenges. First is security concerns due to explosions, assassinations, threats, and persecution. Legal challenges represented by the gaps in laws and legislation can be used against women. These legal issues are present both in al-Assad's constitution and the laws enforced by the armed opposition factions, thus women lack legal protection and a safe environment. Women also face economic challenges such as insufficient salaries and high prices, which lead, in turn, to women leaving education and learning. In addition to all that, women still face social challenges almost daily, such as gender-based violence, and injustices in many humanitarian, societal, and political issues.



Malina Zaid

Humanitarian relief work, establishing community initiatives and local organizations, empowering women and raising awareness of their rights, combating traditions and religious restrictions, and conveying women's voices to decision-makers, are just some of the responsibilities Malina decided to take on. She dreams of a just, equal, and democratic country.

Malina is a human rights activist who still lives in an area under the regime's control. She works for Syrian men and women, providing assistance to all of those who were affected by war without discrimination. She focuses on empowering Syrian women by raising their awareness about their rights and encouraging them to play roles in all aspects of society. Malina is involved in a wide range of activities. In addition to her humanitarian work, she established, in collaboration with other women, an organization involved with empowering women and raising their awareness of all women's rights and issues. Malina describes the organization: "In cooperation with a group of women activists, we started an organization that aims to provide legal and political rights and economic education and training to women. The courses include education about resolution 1325, CEDAW, human rights, personal status laws, and many other issues that aim to put women in decision-making positions."

"I faced huge resistance from the patriarchy and clerics who accused me of being influenced by foreign funding because of my activity in advocating for women's issues, such as inheritance rights, child marriage, and honor killing. However, through long discussions, and with the help of other women, I was able to convince them of the merit of our struggle and our rights. We later gained their approval and even support in some employment projects that we worked on," Malina says.

Malina not only debated with clerics, but she also met a decision-maker and asked for the cancellation of Article 192 of the Syrian Penal Code, on the so-called honor killings.



Sahar Huwayje

Sahar was born in Salamiyah in Hamah. She is a law graduate who lives in Damascus. She was detained by the Syrian regime in 1987 on charges of being a member of the communist labor party, which she joined in her 20s.

Sahar describes her time in detention: "I was totally calm and felt mentally stable. Despite the endless sessions of torture, I denied any relation to the Communist Labor Party. After each torture session, I would go back to solitary confinement where I spent a month. I did not know what I was eating or drinking, the water tasted more like urine, and the cell was so cold and dark."

"I was later moved to a dormitory containing approximately 60 women, which was a whole different experience. Women were of different ages, married and single. I sensed their strength and courage in the face of the horrible conditions of prison. We were

allowed a cold shower once every two weeks and tortured countless times. We spent months wearing the same clothes, and despite all that, we stole moments of joy to dance, sing, and reignite hope”.

After she was transferred to Douma Prison in Damascus, a civilian prison, Sahar met more women from various backgrounds. She says that Douma prison was a completely different experience, as the prison became her little community, containing women politicians from the Communist Labour Party, women affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and others active in human rights issues.

Sahar was released after four and a half years, only to face repercussions, manifested by the difficulty of finding a job: “I did not let prison demoralize me or have a negative impact on my psyche, however, it did have repercussions on finding a job. I was not able to find a job in the government sector as a political prisoner. As for the private sector, I moved between dozens of jobs for ten years. I would refuse or quit any job that contradicted my convictions and my political and humanitarian position, or any work where women are subjected to blackmail or harassment. The only work that I kept doing was journalism and writing, such as opinion pieces, so I wrote many articles for Al-Nour and Al-Hiwar al-Mutamaden newspapers.

Sahar was banned from traveling and does not have a Syrian passport. She still lives in Damascus, and she speaks out about her political stances, clinging to her convictions. She expresses her opinion boldly and frankly, and keeps her solid position. She still writes political, critical, and analytical articles that support the rightful causes of the Syrian people and women’s issues, and she has written dozens of articles published on various sites.

◆◆ Conclusion`

“Despite my lack of feeling of security and safety, and despite all the dire economic and political conditions, I want to stay in my homeland. My true battle is here, and I will achieve victory for our just causes, especially women’s issues.” – Malina Zaid.

Many women like Malina stayed in Syria until this moment, despite facing harassment and death threats, or arrest from all de facto forces. They are often subjected to societal rejection, based on obsolete traditions and societal norms that restrict women’s roles and limit their participation in public affairs. They continue their struggle to achieve change at all levels, to reach a society where gender justice is achieved.

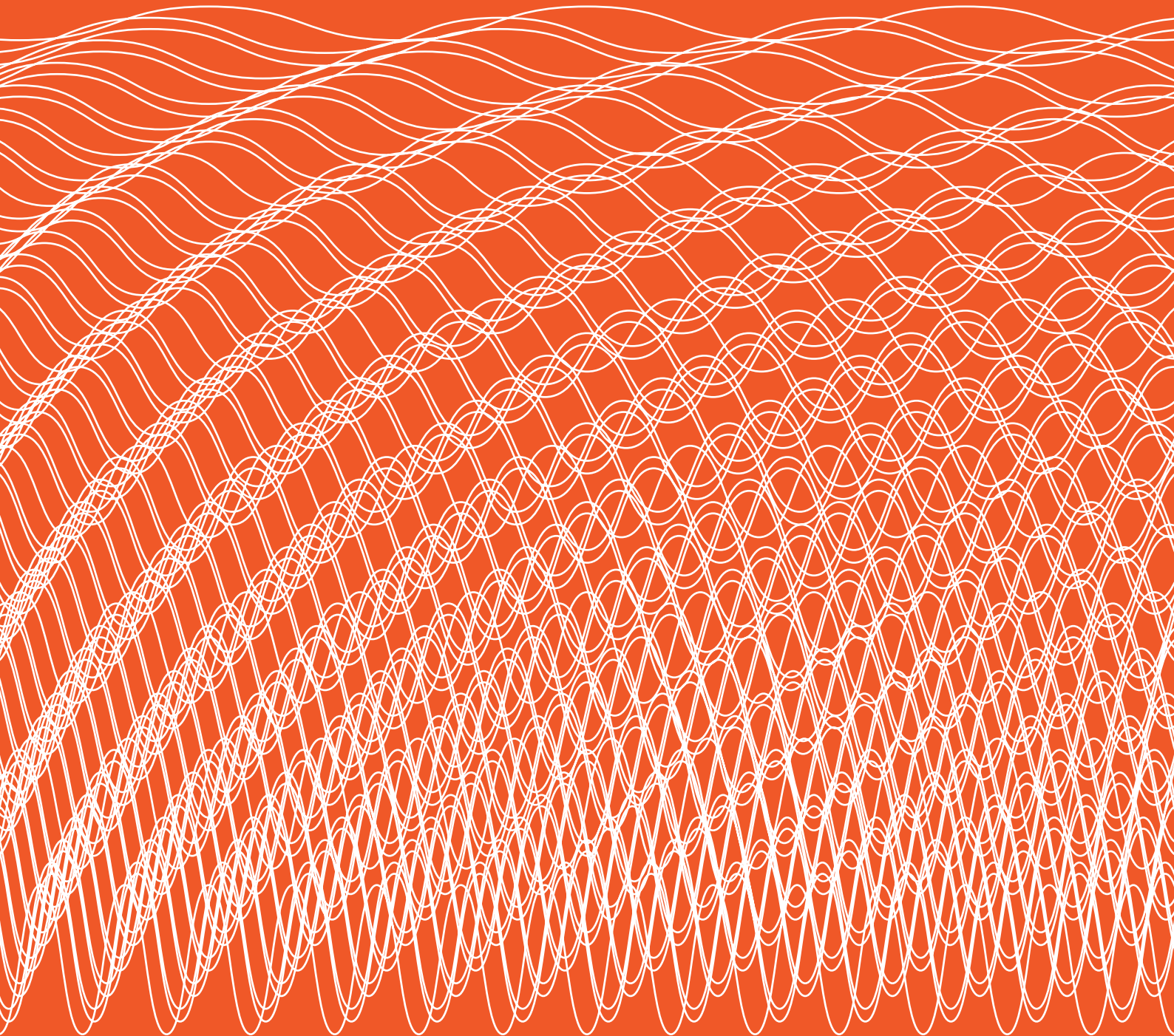
*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Syrian Women’s Political movement



Ripple

A wave or ripple in physics refers to a type of slight wave that can be observed over a surface or produced when filtered by a more intense wave.

In her message, Thuraya Hejazi addresses young Syrian women and future generations under the title “Young Syrian Women Politicians, Opportunities and Challenges Towards Full and Equal Democracy.”



A message from the movement to young Syrian women and future generations

Young Syrian women politicians
Opportunities and challenges on the way to full and equal democracy

◆◆ Thuraya Hejazi

Syria has witnessed long decades of tyranny. The authoritarian regime expected their reign would last forever, and that they would continue hoarding the country's wealth and power. These decades produced a generation of isolated opposition activists, who were unable to take effective action after long years of detention trampled their dreams, leaving them yearning for a past that would never return.

Spring blossomed after these long decades, and slivers of hope found their way into peoples' hearts. A young generation broke the long period of inaction and began to turn the tables on the ruling authorities. The revolution highlighted this generation's ability to confront and initiate changes to their reality, which they considered to have resulted from their parents' silence in the face of oppression and tyranny. This was more than a revolution, it was a matter of existence. So we filled the streets and squares, screaming at the top of our lungs, to demand a country that would recognize our humanity.

Later, there were voices from the political elite who denied our generation's role in the revolution. This revealed generational conflict and power dynamics between the two, as the older generation kept its spaces exclusive, refusing to share with the younger ones. They doubted the younger generation's ability to lead the movement for change. The political opposition was led by an older generation of intellectuals, and although they controlled the decision-making positions, they merely waited for change. They spoke in the name of the

revolution and launched political slogans about empowering youth, but instead of actually supporting youth, these optimistic slogans were used to further limit and marginalize our ability to effect change. But throughout history, it's always been the younger generation who play an essential role in supporting democratic movements.

It is clear that Syrian women also played a critical role from the beginning of the Syrian movement, actively participating in protests and humanitarian work, and providing health care and legal services. However, women's representation among the political elite still remained limited, since politics was accessible only to those with previous political experience. Thus, young women faced two layers of marginalization. The first was the lack of opportunity to gain political experience, as the Assad regime smothered all political movements. From the start of the revolution, young women also faced systematic marginalization, stemming from patriarchal ideologies that dominated families and society. This ideology limited opportunities for women in general, and young women in particular, not only because of their young age, absence of opportunities and experience, but also due to the lack of recognition by the political elites of the younger generation's significant political role.

Democracy cannot be fully realized without guaranteeing equal participation for all. This is especially relevant for young women; equal participation can only be accomplished in an environment free from political and psychological violence, and young women face both gender and age-based discrimination. While young people often face exclusion from leadership positions, for young women, this discrimination also intersects with gender bias.

Despite the formation of many different Syrian political bodies, movements, and parties over the past few years, none had the structures in place to improve youth participation. These political entities lacked the necessary transparent and democratic mechanisms that could build trust in their political work, or a foundation for an equal and just environment. These bodies were built on personal connections and nepotism, forcing youth, especially young women, to consider civic work as the only space where they could make their voices heard.

In November 2017, the Syrian Women's Political Movement was established to confront the deteriorating Syrian political scene and the ongoing attempts to exclude women, with the goal to unify women's efforts and form a shared vision for the future of Syria as a civil democratic country. As the movement grew and expanded, it developed its capabilities to create a supportive environment for young women to participate in political life. The movement believes in a complete and equal democracy, acknowledges the capabilities of young women, and supports the Security Council resolution 2250 on youth, peace, and security, including the UN's GPS-YOUTH 2016-2020 (which focuses on the importance of civic and political participation), and resolution 1325 (which emphasizes the importance of women's participation in peace processes and political institutions).

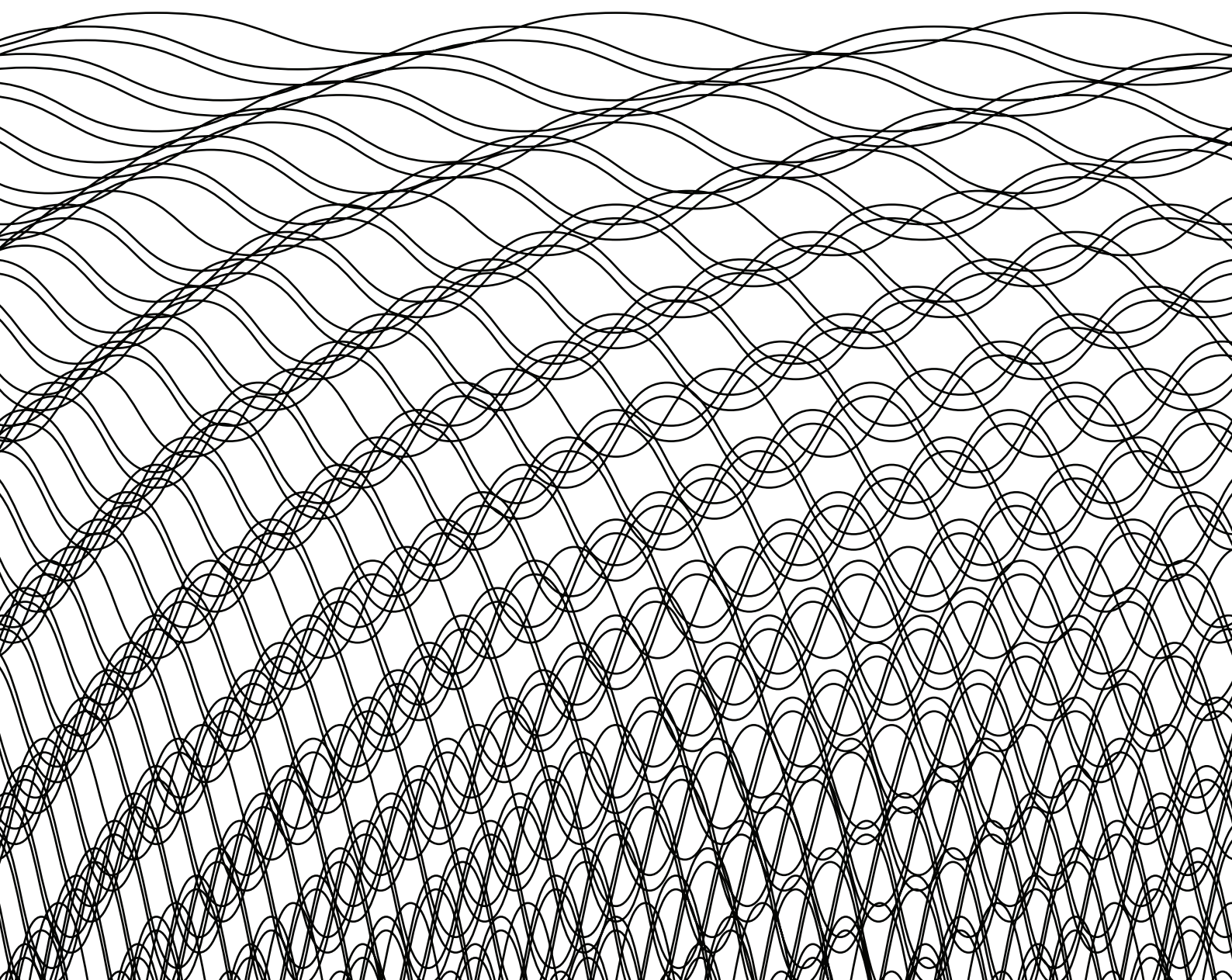
The Syrian Women's Political Movement used democratic elections to choose its General Secretariat, providing young women the opportunity to compete with older activists in a transparent and secure election process, and gain experience in leading political roles. The General Secretariat includes women younger than 35 and grants them a platform to express their particular needs and concerns.

The Movement holds many activities including annual training programs; creating space for political discussions aimed at increasing young women's interest in public affairs, and improving their leadership skills.

In 2021-2022 the movement developed special programs for young women that included mentorship opportunities, to pair up with women from different generations and participate in a shared learning experience, launching the Young Women Politicians Forum, which brought together three generations of Syrian women, (with differing lived experiences), to highlight their political work, with the goal of engaging and encouraging others to get involved.

All these efforts are attempts to move beyond traditional political work and include both young men and young women as activists contributing to the political change that Syria is witnessing. Together, young men and women represent great power and a valuable resource for Syria. Believing in their ability to build a prosperous and stable future is the foundation of social justice and true democracy. The Syrian Women's Political Movement hopes to represent a positive role model, one that other opposition movements will follow.

**The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Syrian Women's Political movement*





Scattering

Scattering in particle physics is a change in the direction of motion of a particle due to its collision with another particle. Collision, according to its physical definition, can occur between particles that repel each other, such as the repulsion between two positive (or negative) ions, and that this does not include direct physical contact between the particles.

In her text, Khawla Dunia sends a message to Syrian Women in Exile.

Waiting in exile

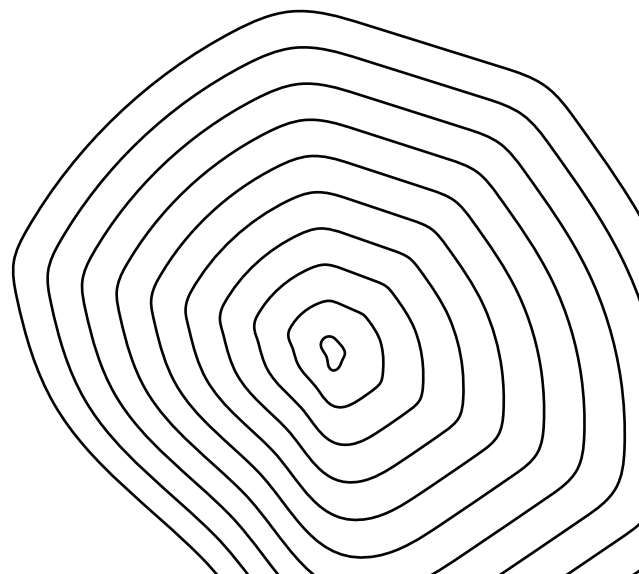
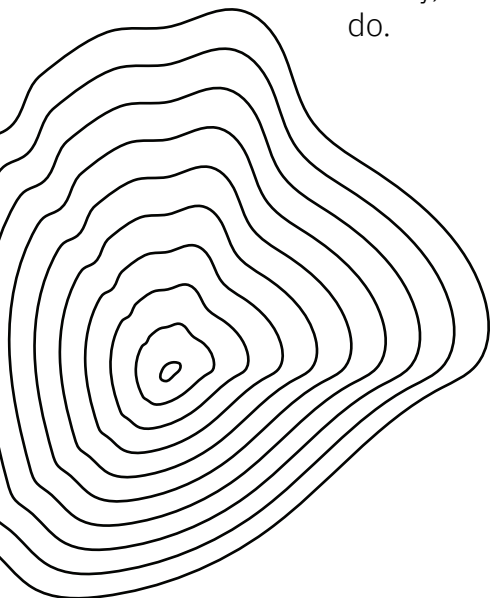
◆◆ Khawla Dunia

Maybe we are safe. Perhaps we're in a better place than those we left behind. We are the unlucky ones wandering in the uselessness of places, holding onto the memories of the ones we left. We are tortured, embarrassed, hopeless, and looking for an excuse for our escape. We say it's temporary, but it opens up things inside, leading to bottomless wounds. Maybe we stopped being ourselves when we left who we were, to search for a new self, in a safe space.

We did not leave to pursue glory. As we got older, we did not rebuild what we missed. We also did not leave to build a better life. We left all of that behind. In this endless wandering, your longing sounds like a crime, when those you left say you were the one who chose to leave. You try to make up for it. You vow to be the voice of the ones who do not have a voice, to be a bridge for the ones who fell, to be a piece of bread for the ones starving in silence. I will bring their voices to the end of the world, and to the bottom of icy hearts.

It then stares you in the face, that connection between the persistence of war and misery in the land of death and destruction, and the amount spent inflaming it. Maybe this connection needs to be broken, or maybe it should be seen and repaired.

Maybe the best thing you can do is remember that you are just a voice, a bridge, and a piece of bread. Do not give in to pride, be dazzled by the flashing lights, or be a tool to exacerbate their hunger, misery, and death. We are nothing, non-feeling, non-human. When we lose our causes as individuals, we try to blend in with the masses, but still we cannot. Perhaps we look like absolute hypocrites when we separate ourselves from our home and family, to live a freedom that we dreamt of for us and for them, and yet, we still do.



Iridescence

Scattering of light or iridescence is the separation of light from its colours when we break colors according to their different values, each color has a certain degree of refraction. A white light separated into colours in the visible spectrum of light is scattered across a prism and diffraction. Fibreglass is one of the types of waveguides (light) that has many applications in communication. Dispersion due to chromatic aberration is one of the reasons that reduce the amount of information that can be transmitted by a single glass fiber

In optics, the wave of light is related to its frequency, which varies according to the medium in which it travels. As a result, the light on the surface of the prism is refracted to varying degrees, and a coloured spectrum appears on the other side. The waveguide has a highly dispersive nature due to its geometric shape.

The process of absorption during which one of the atom's electrons acquires the full energy from the incident photon during scattering is called the photoelectric effect discovered by Albert Einstein.

In collaboration with the artists Hakawati and Zoya, three artworks were commissioned for this exhibition. The content was co-created by 51 members of the Syrian Women's Political Movement



Their faces - Kaleidoscope

Video Art - in collaboration with (Warsha Team, Hakawati) -

Materials coordination: Muna Kattoub,

Produced for Wave 2022 - Syrian Women's Political Movement

Men have always been the “social face” and the “political face”. This visual installation challenges masculine icons by highlighting the faces of a group of influencers in the Syrian Women's Political Movement, carrying the pains and hopes in the details of their faces. In this video art we feel the energy of their presence and trace the impression of faces in Syrian's collective memory.



Their Moments -

Geo location

Video Art - Concept; direction, visual installation by the artist Zoya

Material coordination: Muna Kattoub.

Produced for Wave 2022 - Syrian Women's Political Movement.

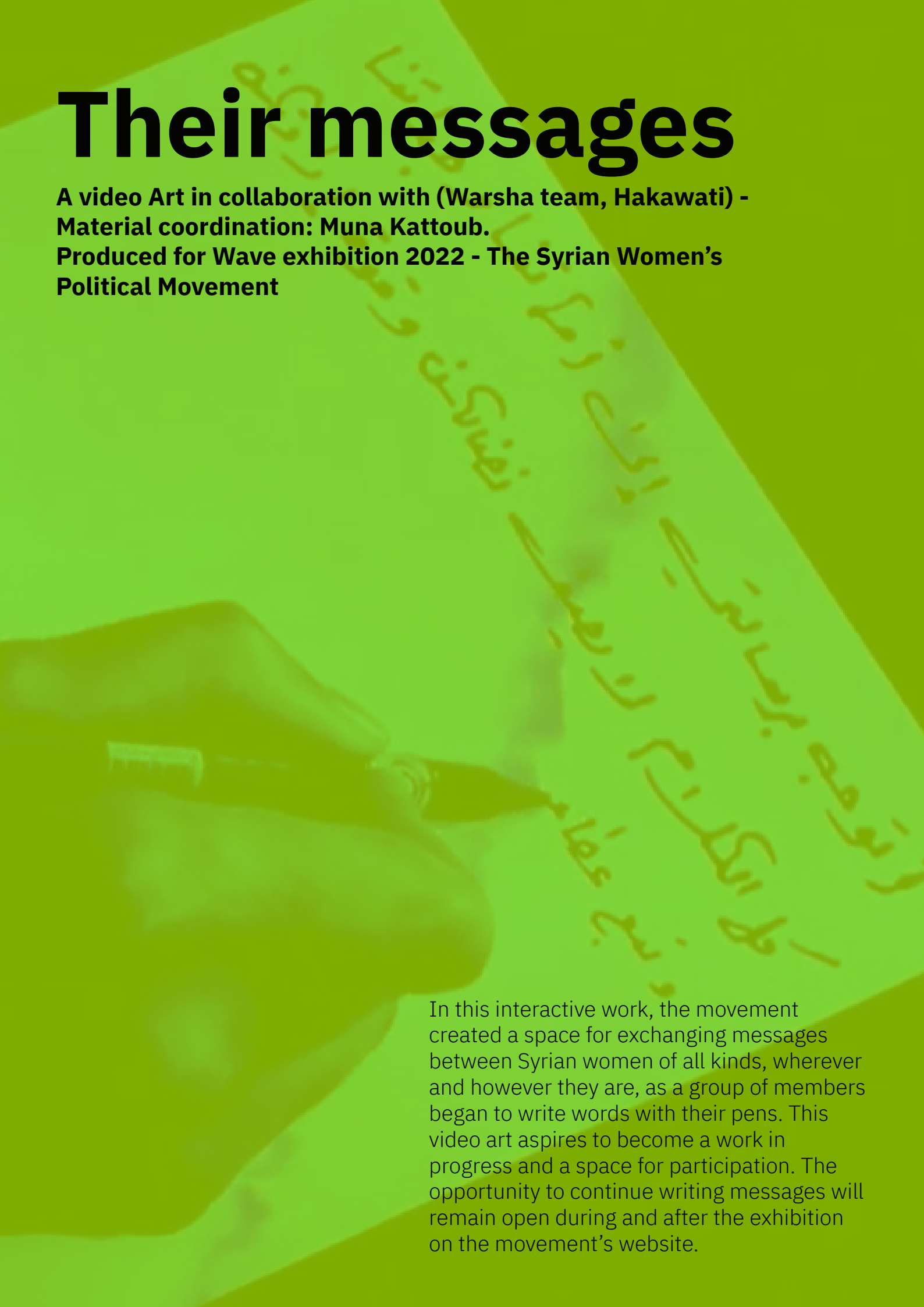
This video-art aims at evoking the absent members of the movement in the physical convening space.

In her visual installation created with the digital geo-locator technology entitled: "Their Moments", the young artist Zoya takes us on a journey during which we meet with members of the movement in their locations in 20 countries around the world. In this video art members shared the geographical location of a moment that changed their lives combined with an intimate melody that is meaningful to them.

Their messages

A video Art in collaboration with (Warsha team, Hakawati) -
Material coordination: Muna Kattoub.

Produced for Wave exhibition 2022 - The Syrian Women's
Political Movement

A hand holding a pen is shown writing Arabic text on a piece of paper. The background is a solid green color. The text on the paper is in Arabic and is partially obscured by the hand and the pen. The overall image has a green tint.

In this interactive work, the movement created a space for exchanging messages between Syrian women of all kinds, wherever and however they are, as a group of members began to write words with their pens. This video art aspires to become a work in progress and a space for participation. The opportunity to continue writing messages will remain open during and after the exhibition on the movement's website.



Credit the Wave exhibition

Concept - Curator: Alma

Material Coordinator: Muna Kattoub

Video Art “Their faces” and “Their messages” :
Warsha team- Hakawati

**Idea and visual preparation for a video of their
moments:** Zoya

Editing and Translation: Henna Platform

Graphic design: Salina Abaza

Credit the Wave exhibition

◆◆ Contributing Members

Ibrahim Shaheen: Lawyer and civil activist, based in Germany

Usama Ashour: a political and feminist activist, based in Germany

Alaa Al-Mohammed: Journalist and feminist activist, based in Turkey

Bassma Kodmani: Syrian politician and academic, residing in France

Thuraya Al-Hadi: A feminist and civic activist, residing in Afrin

Thuraya Hejazi: Economist political activist and feminist, based in France

Joumana Seif: A lawyer and feminist activist, based in Berlin

Khozama Darwish: Political activist and feminist, based in France

Kholoud Mansour: researcher and consultant, based in Sweden

Khawla Dunia a Syrian feminist writer and politician, based in Germany and Turkey

Khawla Barghouth: Political activist and feminist, based in Washington

Dima Moussa: Feminist politician and lawyer, based in Turkey

Rouba Mhaissen: Economist and Community mobiliser, based in Turkey-Lebanon

Roula Roukbi: Feminist and Political activist, living in Lebanon

Rowaida Kanaan: Journalist political activist and feminist, based in France

Reem Al-Hafiz: Lawyer, based in the

Netherlands

Sahar Hawija: Lawyer and writer, political activist and feminist, based in Damascus-Syria

Suad Al-Aswad: A feminist political activist, based in Idlib Syria

Salma Al-Dimashqi: Economic researcher and feminist activist, based in Syria

Sana Hawija: a public interest, lives in Vienna

Suha Alkasir: political activist and feminist, based in the Netherlands

Suzan Khwatmi: Writer, based in Mersin, Turkey

Shadia Martini: is a businesswoman and politician residing in the United States of America

Shams Antar: Writer and civic activist, based in Qamishli Syria

Saba Hakim: A political and human rights activist, based in Germany

Ahed Festuk: Sociology and political studies student and feminist activist, based in New York

Ghina AL Shoumari: Feminist political activist, based in the United Kingdom

Francois Zankih: is a human rights defender and gender activist, based in Turkey

Fardous Albahra: feminist activist, based in Germany

Frial Hussein: Syrian political activist,

Credit the Wave exhibition

◆◆ Contributing Members

based in Germany

Fadila Chami: Feminist activist, based in Spain

Kibrea Al Saour: Feminist and social researcher, based in Turkey

Kawthar Qashkoush: A political feminist and civic activist, residing in northern Syria

Lina Wafai: Politician and feminist activist, based in Germany

Marie Therese Kiriaky: Socio-political activist, based in Austria

Massa Mufti: Education expert, feminist activist, residing in Lebanon

Malina Zaid: A feminist political activist, interested in public affairs and a volunteer in civil work, residing in Syria

Mariam Jalabi: Feminist Politician, based in New York

Muzna Dureid: is a policy analyst and researcher on Women Security and Peace Decisions. Lives in Montreal-Canada

Nidal Joujak: Feminist activist and politician, living in Finland

Nisan Babelli: Director of the Siwar Women's Organization, residing in Turkey

Hiba Hag Aerf: Feminist political activist, former detainee, residing inside Syria

Hawazen Khaddaj: Journalist, feminist political researcher, based in France

Haïam Albaroki: Political activist and feminist, based in the Netherlands

Hiam Alchirout: is a political and feminist activist, based in Norway

Wejdan Nassif: A Syrian writer and feminist, residing in France

Warda El-Yassin: Writer and feminist activist, based in Turkey

Yara Khalil: Student, film director. Lives in Berlin-Germany.

Yafa Alhamawe: a feminist civil media activist, currently based in Toulouse-France

Yamam Alabdulghani: Feminist and civic activist, based in Raqqa-Syria