

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN  
ALLIANCE INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES**

**Equal Rights - Equal Responsibilities  
Droits Égaux - Responsabilités Égales**

**IAW NEWSLETTER - June 1999**



Dear IAW members,

*We are sending you a fast "in between Newsletter", awaiting IWN, which is delayed for various reasons. With the registration forms of the IAW Congress! We have also an urgent request of spreading the word around about the delay and mentioning again the dates, the venue, etc. of the Congress. In this Newsletter you will find a follow-up of the so-called honour killings, telling about an important meeting of six Arab States in June in Jordan. In the July Newsletter we like to go with you to Geneva and Vienna, where important UN meetings are taking place, which are diligently attended by our IAW members.*

**IWN**

For various reasons the latest edition of the IWN has been delayed at the printers and unfortunately this is a vital edition as it has the Registration Form and other Congress information. As an e-mail member you have, of course, received these forms but there are many of our members still waiting for them. If you are in contact with any IAW members who are not on the email listing, would you be kind enough to tell them that the magazine is now in the post and should be with them very soon.

**IAW Action Programme 1999 - 2002**

Looking at the Congress agenda, you will find on the first three days of September the IAW Action Programme 1999 – 2002. And, looking at the former IAW Action Programme of 1997 – 1999, you will find five headings: 1. Civil and Political Rights; 2. Education for All – Legal Literacy; 3. Poverty; 4. Violence and 5. Health. And, also looking at those five subjects you will find in all five the following request: "The IAW urges its members organisations to ...". It will be very interesting to know how the Affiliates have filled in these requests, in 1997, 1998 and 1999. Did they put the emphasis mainly on one of the five subjects in those years, or on two or more? Did they book a result of their actions and if so, what was it? And will they continue their actions, or change them or abandon them and why? So, if you have written your report for the Congress, please sent a copy to us by e-mail and/or attachment. We love to make a selection and quote some of your actions and proposals for all IAW e-mail members to read in the next Newsletters.

**Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing**

These three capitals have become associated with three major UN Conferences.

1994 International Conference on Population and Development - ICPD - in Cairo.

1995 World Social Summit on Development - WSSD - in Copenhagen.

1996 World Conference on Women - WCW - in Beijing.

The implementation of the results and agreements reached in these conferences will be monitored by the UN member states at the upcoming +5 reviews.

Cairo June 30 - July 2 1999 during a Special Session of the General Assembly in New York.

Copenhagen June 26 - June 30 2000 during a Special Session of the General Assembly in Geneva.

Beijing June 5 – June 9 2000 during a Special session of the General Assembly in New York.

**IAW Fund Raising Table**

Most of you know that at each of our meetings we ask members to donate gifts for the IAW fund raising table so please squeeze lots of little light gifts into your bag when packing for New York. And of course once you get there Pat Richardson will be behind the table urging you to buy! You can find some extraordinary things at a reasonable price. For instance: funny beads, foreign stamps and strange coins for your (grand) children. Or a small platypus souvenir from Australia, or nice smelling perfumes or embroidery from Africa. You can take it back for your IAW friends who are feeling miserable because they have to stay at home. And you can even find a book written by an IAW member and signed by her too!

## **HONOUR KILLINGS, a follow-up**

### **Six Arab States seek shared solution**

Representatives of six Arab countries gathered in Amman, Jordan, this month to discuss ways to prevent "honour crimes", acts of violence committed against women by family members, generally for what is considered "immoral behaviour". It is the first meeting of its kind in the region, the Jordan Times reports. Participants from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen "agreed that the causes of honour crimes were similar [in their countries] because of the patriarchal and tribal social structures in each society". They criticised laws in each of their countries that exempt those who commit honour killings from punishment or reduce their penalty, noting that each of their countries "has similar legislation that protects such criminals".

Human rights and women's activists in **Jordan** have been calling for amendments to article 340 of the penal code, which exempts from punishment or reduces the penalty against those who kill female relatives for "immoral behaviour". Last year, 20 honour killings were reported in Jordan, although data of the number of crimes are likely to be incomplete. Many honour crimes are unreported, or may be recorded as accidental deaths or suicides, noted lawyer Muna Zoughbaba of the Jordanian Women's Union. In some instances, she said, "the family would kill and bury their daughters and then report them missing".

According to figures presented by participants, **Palestine** appears to have one of the most significant problems. In the Gaza Strip, 239 violent crimes were reported against women between 1996 and 1998. Aida Toumei of the Women Against Violence Organisation said that 177 women who were listed as having died by natural causes are believed to have been victims of honour killings. Sixty-four honour crimes were reported between 1990 and 1999 in the Palestinian region (defined by its 1948 borders).

**Egypt**, which has the largest population in the Arab world, reported 52 honour crimes in 1997. According to Azza Suleiman of the Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance, the problem is connected to the belief that women are the property of their male guardians. In many cases, she added, the murderer has been the woman's mother or sister.

Thirty-six honour crimes were reported in **Lebanon** between 1996 and 1998. "It is most widely spread in the small cities and villages, where the killers, mostly under 18 years of age, are treated as heroes," explained Seta Kerechekian, of the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women. Lebanon was the first Arab country to amend its legislation by canceling the exemption from punishment for perpetrators of honour killings. It also stipulated that both men and women who commit honour crimes be subject to the same punishment.

**Yemeni** professor Mohammad Ba Obeid of Sana'a University said that these unreported crimes in his country are referred to as "dark figures", and explained that Yemen's tribal structure encourages men to commit such crimes and to keep the matters private. "If anyone reveals any information about a certain crime he could end up losing his life", he said.

Sheikh Izzedin Al Khatib Al Tamimi, who advises Jordanian King Abdullah on Islamic affairs, said Islam forbids individuals from committing vigilante acts to punish adulterers. "Many men and women have been killed because of their relatives' ignorance, their moods and their passions that are in no way related to Islam", he said. "Killers think their victims' blood is a medal representing their act of heroism or honour. They do not know that God's anger and curse will remain with them". (Rana Hussein, Jordan Times, 2 Jun).

### **Interesting Websites**

Some members have sent us the URLs of interesting websites. Here are a few examples.

**HYPERLINK** [www.babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate](http://www.babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate)

This website will translate into European languages and it may be possible in the near future to translate Word documents. A sophisticated system of this kind can translate English into French and vice versa. This could be important news for our French speaking members! In this way we can even translate our English Newsletter into French or Spanish or German.

"Babelfish" comes from an English writer called Douglas Adams who wrote the amusing book *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* many years ago. It became a famous book and was made into a radio and also TV series. The main characters in the book hitch their way around the galaxy, meeting up with all manner of strange people

and creatures. There is also a very useful fish called the babelfish. You can put it in your ear (yes it's alive) and you can understand every language. Presumably there is also a connection with the Tower of Babel in the Bible where a multitude of languages was spoken by people building the Tower. As a result of the confusion the Tower was never finished!

HYPERLINK [www.acfoa.asn.au](http://www.acfoa.asn.au)

On this website you will find information about the Australian Council for Overseas Aid including a speech by Janet Hunt, Executive Director. Although the beginning of the speech is about her early days, she focuses later on the global economy and quotes a wonderful description of the economy as a three layered cake with icing!

HYPERLINK [www.un.org/womenwatch/forum](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forum)

A global discussion on-line on the 12 critical areas of concern in the Plan For Action on Beijing +5 will be starting at the end of June and continue till the end of December. With WomenWatch, the website of UN/DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW. With the exception of National Machineries, which have already been discussed.

With best wishes from the Editorial Committee (EC) IAW on Internet,  
Joke Sebus

NB: We invite you to redistribute this Newsletter to IAW members without an e-mail address. Also, please advise us if you know of any IAW members or affiliate/associate organisations with an e-mail address, and in that case: please be so kind to contact Pat Richardson.

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International Alliance of Women / Alliance Internationale des Femmes

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