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Women

8 March: Solidarity with women in Gaza, the DR of the Congo, and of the world at large

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On this international day of struggle for the rights of women, the CADTM reasserts its commitment to feminist movements that fight systemic oppressions everywhere in the world: patriarchal capitalism, neocolonial exploitation, and militarized violence.

Austerity measures imposed in the name of repayment of illegitimate debt are a heavier burden on women,* who are over-represented in exploitative and invisibilized sectors. Privatization of public services, destruction of health systems, dismantling of social protections: the consequences are tragic for women (as well as for the most vulnerable groups), who have to make up for the State's shortcomings. In all countries, whether in the South or in the North, the logic of debt and profit relies on exploiting free or underpaid labour by women.

Women in the South pay the highest price!

In a global context earmarked by the deepening of social, economic and ecological crises, women of the South pay the highest price for their governments' illegitimate indebtedness. Debt feeds the neoliberal policies imposed by international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank) that take public services apart and privatize public goods.

Whether in Africa, South America or Asia, women attempt, through their invisible and unpaid labour, to make up for the destruction of health systems, of education, access to water and to land. Far from being isolated instances, those acts of violence are actually part of a global system of domination in which patriarchy, racism, capitalism and colonialism feed on each other.

It is worth remembering that in Belgium alone the Ligue des travailleuses domestiques (League of female Domestic Workers) estimates that some 70 to 80,000 undocumented women work in the domestic sector. Those thousands of women are deprived of their rights and exploited yet respond to a blatant deficit of services dedicated to children and dependent people, a sector that has been neglected by successive Belgian governments at every level. The transfer of this essential care work to undocumented, invisibilized and badly paid workers is one of the symptoms of our liberal societies, which exploit the most vulnerable people and devalue the work of women to the benefit of the rich.

Gaza: women face war and destruction

In Gaza, Palestinian women are subjected to an unprecedented level of violence while the world merely looks on: their children are murdered, their land is grabbed through a colonial occupation, their houses and schools and hospitals are relentlessly bombed, they are forced into displacement and deprived of all basic care and facilities. They have to survive practically without access to water, food or medicine.

The CADTM denounces an ongoing genocide and Zionist colonial violence, supported by Western powers. The CADTM affirms its unconditional solidarity with Palestinian women and the Palestinian people as they stand up to a colonial war. According to available data women and children represent a significant part of the victims in the Gaza Strip. The UN indicated that from October 2023 to October 2024 women and children accounted for "almost 70%" of deaths in Gaza. In addition, Oxfam reported that more women and children were killed by the Israeli army in one year of war in Gaza than in any other equivalent period in the last twenty years.

DRC: the exploitation of resources goes hand in hand with extreme violence against women

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, women's bodies are on the front line of violence. In mining areas, where the exploitation of cobalt, coltan and other minerals feeds global supply chains, they suffer sexual violence, mutilation and forced displacement. The CADTM points out that the predatory extraction of Congolese resources is intimately linked to the debt system, which is used as a tool of domination that subjects the country to structural dependence.

In the east of the country, notably in Kivu, violence perpetrated by armed groups such as M23, supported by regional and international interests, are part and parcel of a neocolonial logic of exploiting underground resources (among other interdependent factors). Sexual violence used as an instrument to control and subject women, as also forced displacements, cannot be reduced to mere manifestations of individual violence or to direct consequences of armed conflicts. They are part of a global system in which the extractivist economic logic and power relationships play a major role in perpetuating violence against women.

The CADTM denounces the complicity of international creditors and multinationals in perpetuating this violence. The illegitimate indebtedness of the DRC for decades has served only to deprive the population of infrastructure, and women in particular of their fundamental rights of access to health, education and security.

Let us fight for a world that is free from the burden of debt, from patriarchy and colonialism
Faced with such systemic violence, the 8th of March is for us an international day of struggle for a radical transformation of our societies, aiming to build a collective resistance against the prevailing model. We consider that women's struggles cannot be dissociated from struggles against capitalism, against illegitimate debt and for a social, environmental and feminist justice.

The CADTM calls upon international solidarity with women in Palestine, the DRC and of all areas in the world where patriarchal, racist and economic violence has to be resisted. We reassert that the cancellation of illegitimate debt, the end of austerity measures, economic sovereignty and self-determination of the people are necessary conditions for a feminist, just and liberated future, in the North and in the South.

On the 8th of March, let us strike and demonstrate in the streets for a world without debt, without exploitation and without war!

*When we refer to women, we mean anyone who identifies as such..

PS:

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