

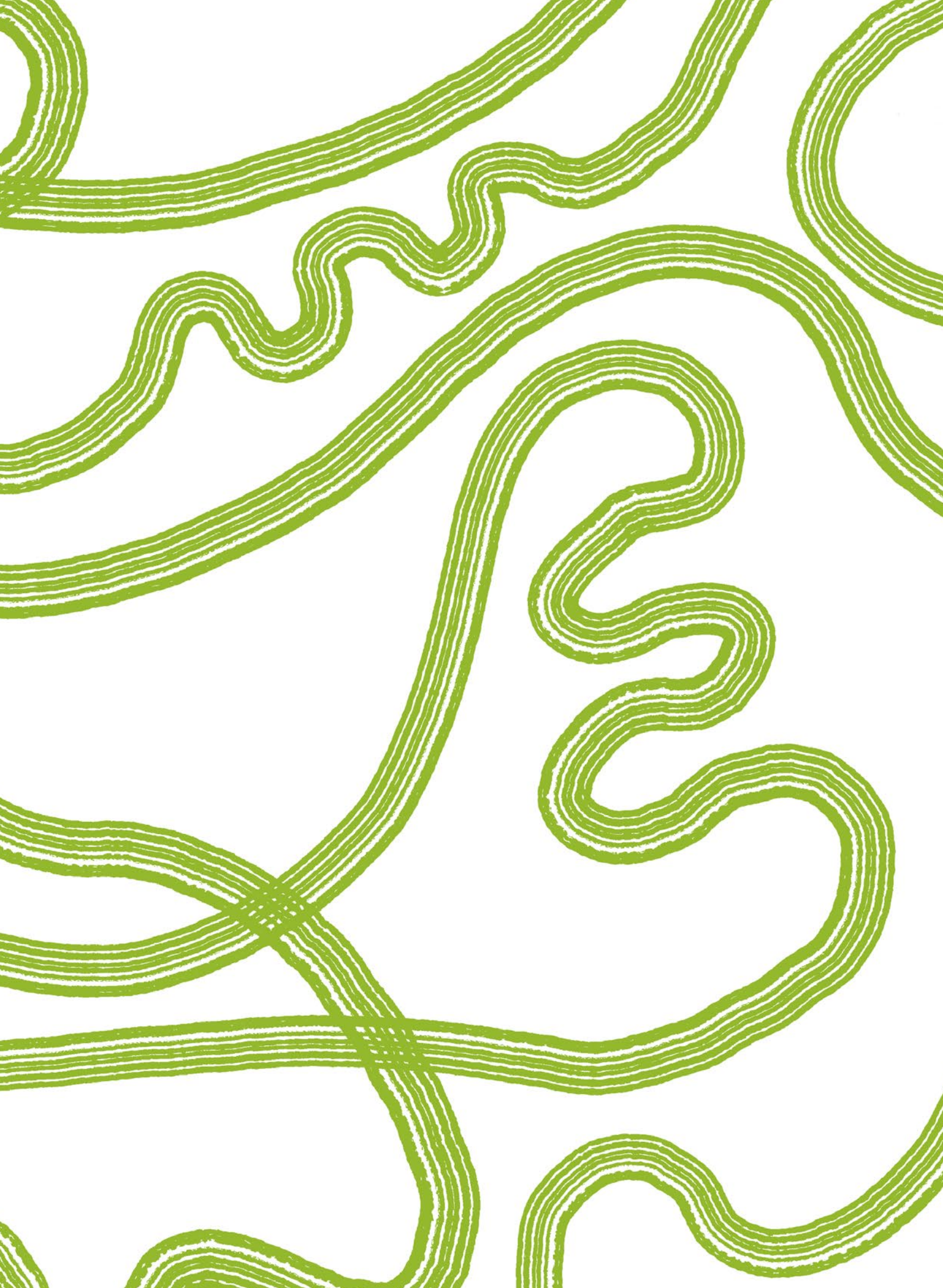


FEMINISM
in **PICTURES**

GLOBAL FEMINIST PITCH









FEMINISM *in* PICTURES

GLOBAL FEMINIST PITCH

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Foreword

The Global Feminist Pitch strives to create opportunities for young feminists and to make feminist movements from countries of the Global South visible. In 2023, we collaborated with seven incredible feminist illustrators from Brazil, Iran, India, Georgia, Pakistan, Turkiye, and Kenya on the creation of seven graphic novels that portray stories of feminists, feminist movements, and significant feminist moments from their regions. These graphic novels are evidence of the continuing streams of feminist resistance and resilience in diverse global contexts.

Feminism in Pictures includes stories, such as that of Sonia Guajajara, who is an Indigenous activist, environmentalist, politician, and Brazil's first Minister of Indigenous Peoples. It contains personal reflections on feminism, disability, and disability justice in India. It explores the significance of the Istanbul Convention on gender-based violence and the repercussions on women after Turkiye's withdrawal. It highlights the transformative power of feminist movements through the stories of the Women Life Freedom movement in Iran, which has potential to become the first feminist revolution in the world, and the Aurat March in Pakistan, which united women of all social backgrounds in the fight for economic, environmental, and restorative justice, with a specific focus on gender-based violence. It explores societal changes in Georgia in the 1990s and the psychological effect it had on women. Finally, it documents symbolic spaces of feminist activism and resistance such as the Uhuru Park, a space for feminist protest significant to generations of feminists in Kenya.

We hope this book will provide a glimmer of optimism to all feminists who dream and work towards an inclusive and just future. With that, we leave you to enjoy the stories and the beautiful artwork.



Jana Prošinger



Merima Šišić

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SUPER SONIA



—
**SONIA
GUAJAJARA**

Helô D'Angelo
—

Sonia Guajajara

by Helô D'Angelo

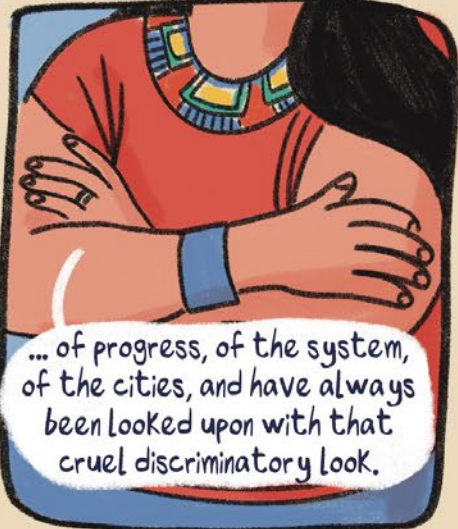


I never imagined being a minister.

In my childhood, I didn't know such a thing even existed.



But I knew that all the Indigenous Peoples were on the margins of everything...



... of progress, of the system, of the cities, and have always been looked upon with that cruel discriminatory look.



So I have always known...

...what I was supposed to do in this life:

To fight for recognition and respect.

SONIA GUAJAJARA IS THE FIRST INDIGENOUS MINISTER IN ALL OF BRAZIL'S HISTORY.

SHE IS THE FIRST WOMAN TO HOLD THE POSITION IN THE MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES...

...WHICH, ACTUALLY, WAS ALSO CREATED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2023.

Brazil spent more than half a century without direct Indigenous participation.



It's time to change this!

IT TOOK A LONG TIME, BECAUSE INDIGENOUS HISTORY IN BRAZIL IS A STORY OF VIOLENCE.

THERE ARE MORE THAN 305 INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN BRAZIL - AND AT LEAST 114 ISOLATED ONES (WITH NO CONTACT WITH THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE TRIBE).

THEY ARE PRESENT IN ALL STATES OF BRAZIL (NOT JUST IN THE FORESTS, AS IS COMMONLY IMAGINED).



THIS MEANS ABOUT 1,693,535 PEOPLE AND MORE THAN 274 LANGUAGES!*

BUT CULTURAL DIVERSITY IS NOT THE ONLY GREAT ASSET OF THESE PEOPLES: THEY ARE THE MOST CONCERNED WITH THE PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY

IN BRAZIL, FROM 1980 TO 2010, LEGALLY RECOGNIZED INDIGENOUS LANDS REDUCED DEFORESTATION BY 75%.

We are 5% of the world's population, but conserve 82% of its biodiversity.**

In our villages there is clean water, healthy, unpoisoned food, and forests, which bring rain and pure air.

We understand that what affects one affects all.

EVEN SO, CURRENTLY ONLY 13% OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY IS LEGALLY DEMARCATED AS INDIGENOUS LANDS***

(THERE ARE ONLY 732 INDIGENOUS LANDS IN TOTAL)

HISTORICALLY, OUR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE BEEN THREATENED BY THE AGRIBUSINESS, AND BY MINING AND TIMBER SECTORS, WHICH ARE VERY STRONG, BOTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, IN BRAZIL.

THEY HOLD THE MAJORITY OF SEATS IN OUR PARLIAMENT NOWADAYS,

AND USE THIS INFLUENCE TO FUEL THE WAR AGAINST THE NATIVE POPULATIONS.

This is absurd, since we were actually here first: some anthropologists point to more than 12,000 years ago.

For us, money is not the most important thing. To be rich is to be free within one's own territory. Not to own gold.



* ACCORDING TO THE 2023 CENSUS
** UNITED NATIONS
*** FUNAI

MAYBE THE WORD "CONFLICT" GIVES THE IDEA THAT THIS FIGHT IS BALANCED.

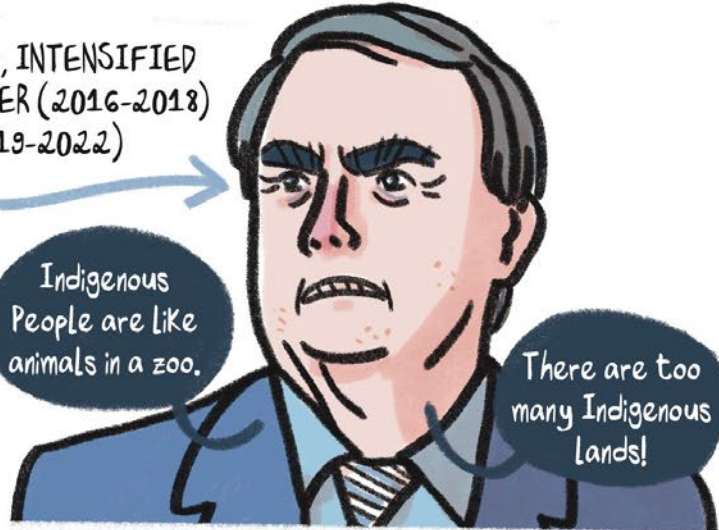
BUT REALITY IS CLOSER TO A MASSACRE, INTENSIFIED AFTER THE GOVERNMENTS OF MICHEL TEMER (2016-2018) AND JAIR MESSIAS BOLSONARO (2019-2022)

Americans decimated their Indigenous Peoples long ago. We were not so competent.

Indigenous People are like animals in a zoo.

There are too many Indigenous Lands!

- THE ONLY PRESIDENT IN THE COUNTRY'S RECENT HISTORY WHO DID NOT MAKE NEW DEMARCATIONS.



HIS ATTACKS AT INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS FED A HUGE WAVE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THEM:

IN 2021, THERE WERE 176 REGISTERED VIOLENT DEATHS AMONGST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



AND 305 CASES OF LAND INVASIONS, THREE TIMES MORE THAN 2018, WHEN BOLSONARO BEGAN HIS TERM*.

* DATA: CONSELHO INDIGENISTA MISSIONARIO (CIMI)

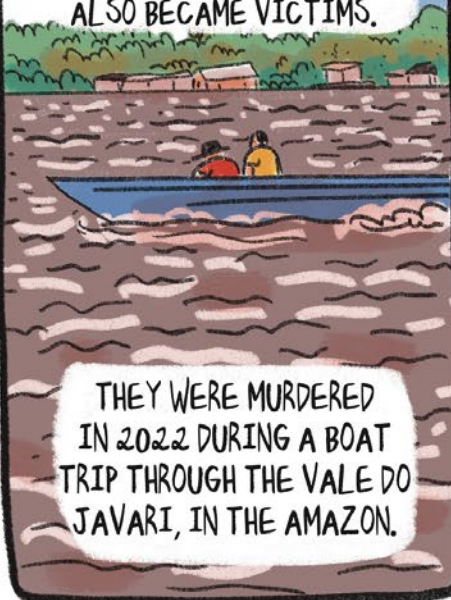
A RECENT, SAD EXAMPLE IS THE YANOMAMI PEOPLE. WITHOUT GOVERNMENT AID, LAND INVASIONS AND VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS WITH MINERS BECAME FREQUENT,

WHICH CAUSED THE YANOMAMI TO LOSE THEIR ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER AND TO THEIR ANCESTRAL PLANTING AND HUNTING GROUNDS.



FROM 2019 TO 2023, AT LEAST 570 YANOMAMI DIED OF MALNUTRITION, PNEUMONIA, AND MERCURY POISONING. 99 OF THEM WERE CHILDREN.**

NON-INDIGENOUS ALLIES LIKE BRAZILIAN INDIGENIST BRUNO PEREIRA AND BRITISH JOURNALIST DOM PHILLIPS ALSO BECAME VICTIMS.



THEY WERE MURDERED IN 2022 DURING A BOAT TRIP THROUGH THE VALE DO JAVARI, IN THE AMAZON.

And we've been fighting the "Destruction Package": a series of bills that threaten our peoples.

Like the PL 191, which authorizes mining in Indigenous Lands.

Or the PL 6299/02, which facilitates the use of agrottoxics...

Or the PL 2633, which offers financial support to people who have invaded our lands, called "grileiros".

Or the worst of them all, the Marco Temporal, an incostitutional legal decision...

...which dictates that Indigenous lands that were not occupied by 1988 are not legally Indigenous territory.



** DATA: MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT SONIA WAS CHOSEN AS OUR FIRST MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.

BUT WHO IS SONIA GUAJAJARA?



SONIA BONE DE SOUSA SILVA SANTOS IS KNOWN AS SONIA GUAJAJARA



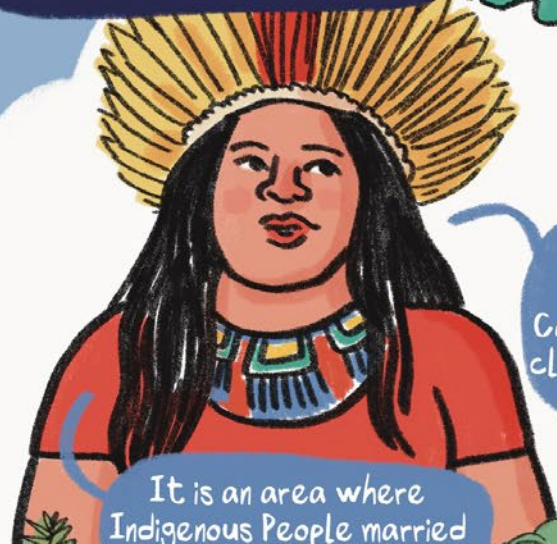
BECAUSE OF HER PEOPLE: THE GUAJAJARA / TENETEHARA

THEY ARE ONE OF THE MOST POPULOUS INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN BRAZIL:



THERE ARE ROUGHLY 12.000 GUAJAJARA INHABITANTS...

...LIVING IN THE ARARIBOIA INDIGENOUS LAND, IN MARANHÃO, A STATE LOCATED IN THE NORTHEAST OF BRAZIL.



I was born on March 6, 1974, in the village of Campo Formoso. It is very close to Arariboia, but not exactly inside it.

It is an area where Indigenous People married non-Indigenous folks....

...Like my father and mother:

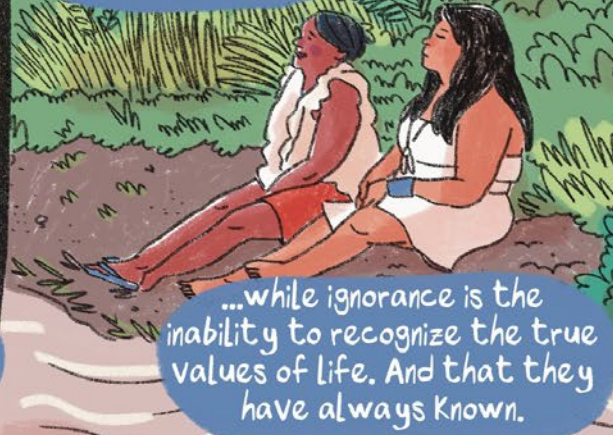


Agostinho Arruda, non-Indigenous

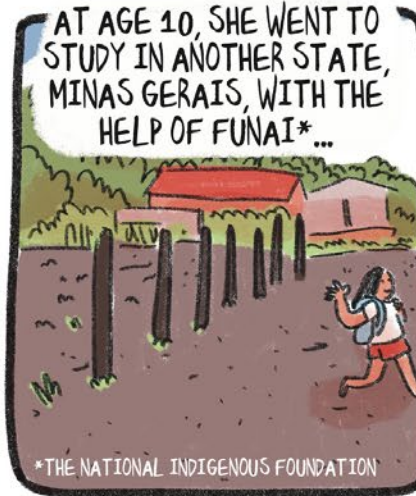
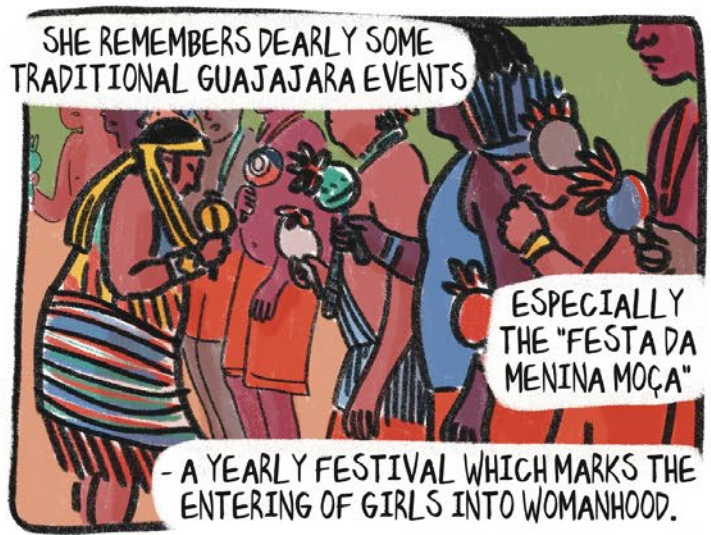
and Darly Bone, Indigenous

My parents are illiterate, but were never ignorant.

Because to be literate is to know how to differentiate the letters...



...while ignorance is the inability to recognize the true values of life. And that they have always known.



HOWEVER, SONIA'S IDENTITY AS AN INDIGENOUS WOMAN WAS ALWAYS PRESENT IN HER EXPERIENCE.



IN 2000 SHE TOOK PART IN HER FIRST NATIONAL INDIGENOUS CONFERENCE:

There, I met other Indigenous People, and came to a better understanding of the struggle for land.

I heard all these other stories,

and understood that I needed to do something, that I needed to help.



ONCE SHE STARTED PARTICIPATING MORE, SONIA NEVER STOPPED:

2003: ELECTED GENERAL COORDINATOR OF THE COORDINATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ORGANIZATIONS OF MARANHÃO



2008: SPOKE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



If there is no biodiversity, there can be no humanity.

2009: BEGAN HER YEARLY PARTICIPATION AT THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES...



...AND TRAVELLED THROUGH MORE THAN 30 COUNTRIES.



2017: WAS INVITED ONSTAGE BY POP STAR ALICIA KEYS AT ROCK IN RIO.

2018: BECAME THE FIRST INDIGENOUS PERSON TO RUN AS VICE-PRESIDENT IN BRAZIL



GUILHERME BOULOS RAN AS PRESIDENT

2019: HELPED ORGANIZE THE FIRST NATIONAL INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S MARCH



2020: CO-FOUNDED THE NATIONAL ARTICULATION OF ANCESTRAL WARRIOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN

2021: LED THE ANTI-COVID STRATEGIES AT THE BRAZILIAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ARTICULATION




2022: ELECTED AS CONGRESSWOMAN



PRESIDENT LULA

2023: CHOSEN AS THE FIRST MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES




It is though to be a minister.

Before, I brought the problems to be death with...


...Now, I have to deal with them.

I wanted to give up so many times. But I cannot.



I was never dazzled by power.


I always understood it as a means to reach justice and historical reparation.



I hope I can motivate other Indigenous girls, who live in the villages, who cannot yet see a different reality.

I want to show them that it is possible.

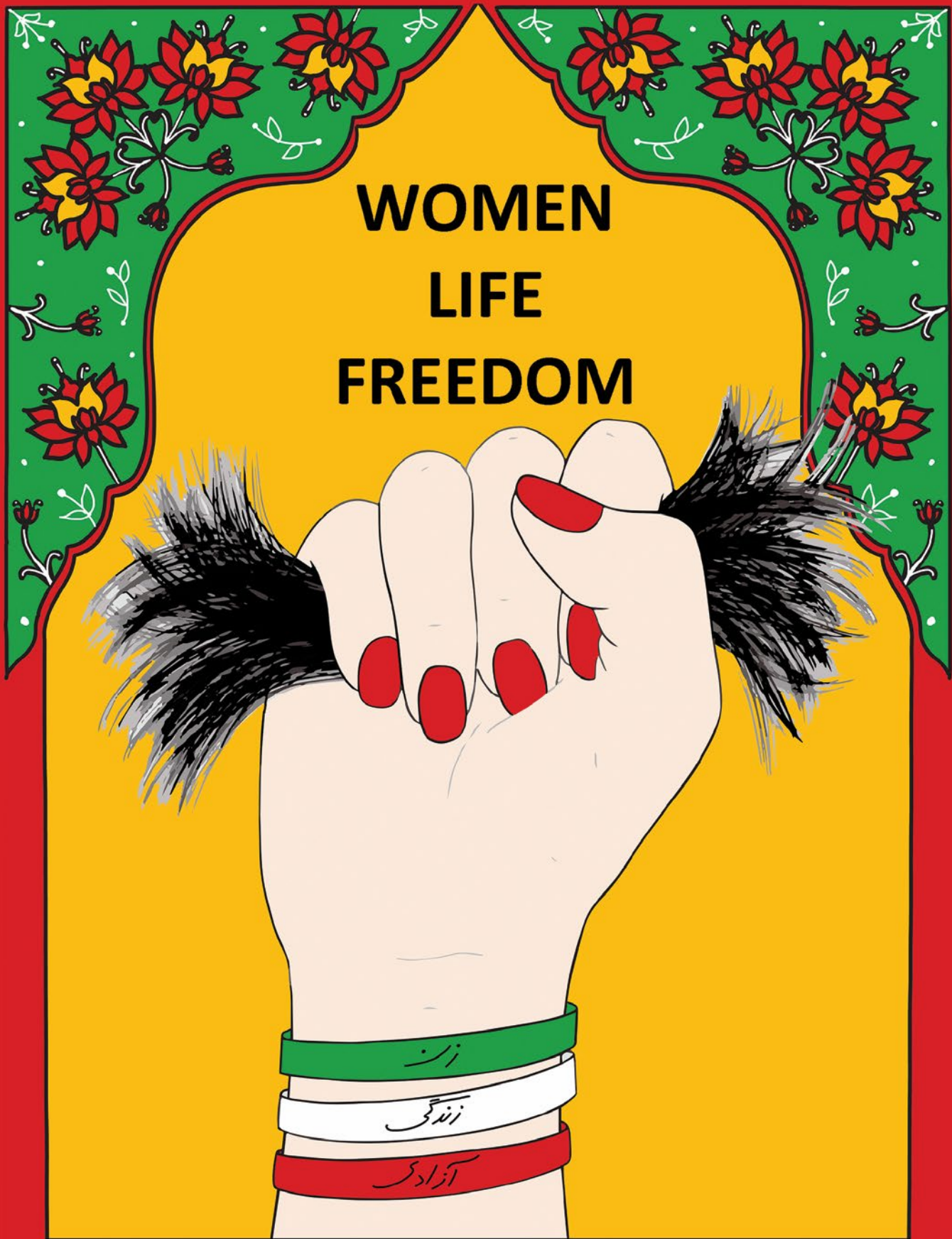
Show them how important it is for them to engage in the Indigenous movement, in our collective struggles.



If you fight individually, you will hardly succeed.

And this fight must include ALL of us, not only Indigenous Peoples.

That's the only way we will all succeed.



Iranian Women's Resilience Story

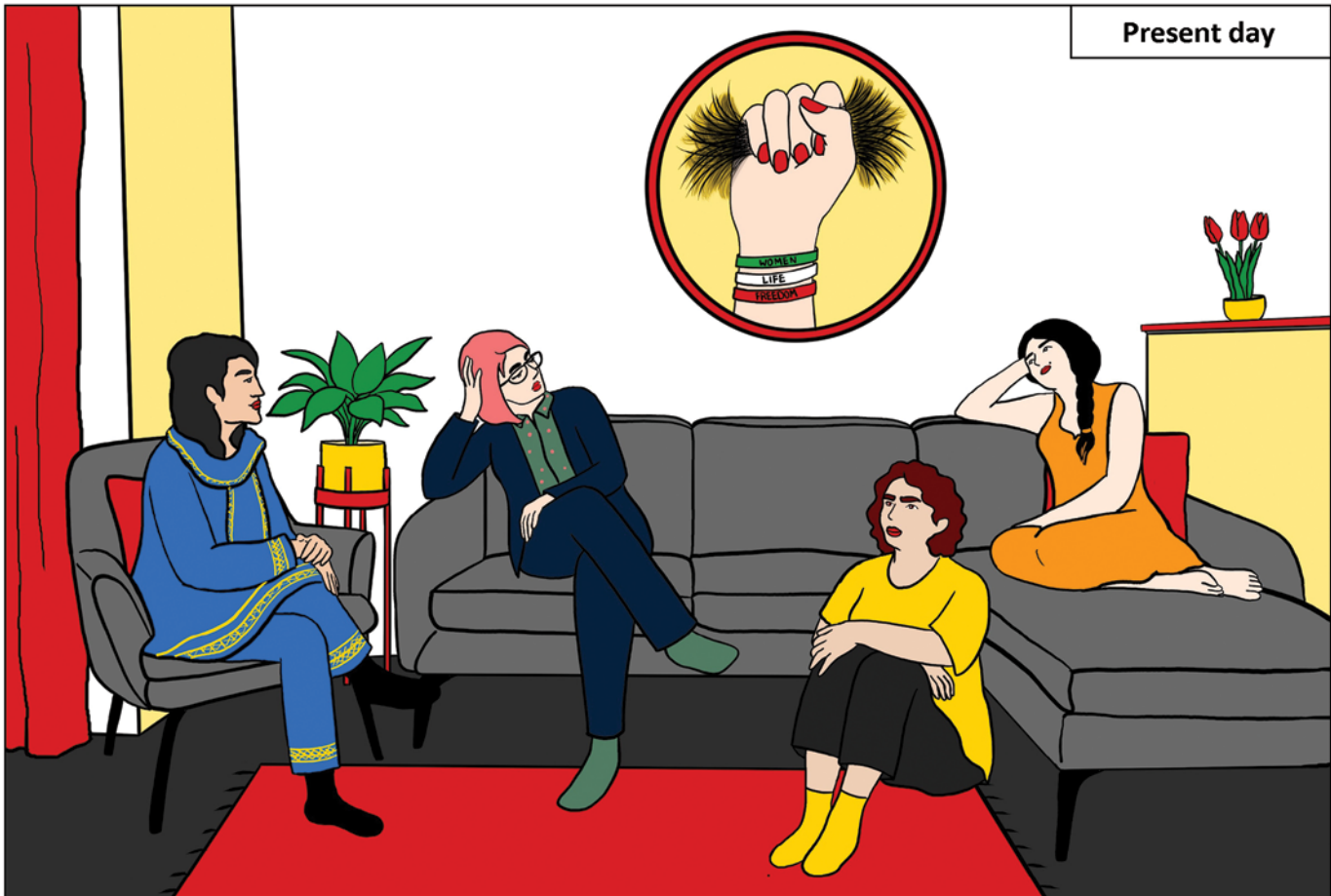
Roshi Rouzbehani

Women Life Freedom:

Iranian Women's Resilience Story

by Roshi Rouzbehani

In September 2022, protests erupted throughout Iran after the tragic death of Mahsa (Jina) Amini while in the custody of the morality police for not wearing a proper hijab. These protests quickly transformed into a widespread uprising against the political system's gender apartheid, marking the beginning of Iran's first feminist revolution: The Women, Life, Freedom revolution.



A gathering of Iranian feminists is taking place at Mina's home to commemorate and honor the Women, Life, Freedom movement.



Maybe it all began even earlier, with Vida Movahed's brave act?

In 2017, Vida mounted a utility box on Enghelab (Revolution) Street and raised her scarf on a stick to defy mandatory hijab.

Perhaps it began even earlier with Homa Darabi's 1994 political self-immolation against compulsory hijab.

Ah, yes. Maybe Homa's act ignited our rebellion.

But When Mahsa died, it was a powerful wakeup call for each and every one of us.

Everyone was absolutely shocked that just showing a few strands of hair could actually get someone killed!

Yes, her death shook the nation, evolving from a women's rights outcry to a revolutionary call for regime change.

It was Niloofar Hamedei's Twitter photo of Mahsa's family embracing at the hospital that broke the news of her death.

No one could do anything. The black dress of mourning has become our national flag.

And she's still imprisoned simply for doing her job as a journalist.

Niloofar was the first to report Mahsa was on life support in a Tehran hospital. Since then, she and Elahe Mohammadi, who covered Mahsa's funeral, are held in Evin prison. They are now Iranian's national heroes.

Remember the brave Kurdish women at Mahsa's funeral who removed their headscarves?

Yes, they chanted 'Women, Life, Freedom' and it became our revolution's slogan.

Women!
Life!
Freedom!

Jin!
Jijan!
Azadi!

Jina, dear!
You will not die.
Your name will
turn into a symbol.

Spreading rapidly, the slogan 'Women, Life, Freedom' appeared as graffiti on walls and circulated widely through social media in various languages spoken across the country. It defined the women-led uprising, with women at the forefront of the protests, igniting their nationwide fight against gender discrimination.



Jin, Jiyan, Azadi (Women, Life, Freedom)
Kurdish root should not be forgotten.



Schoolgirls joined protests, spreading the demonstrations to classrooms.



Protesters utilized social media to unite, voice their demands, and show courage and anger.

Baloch women in the southeast, facing even greater risks, bravely joined the protests.





In Iranian culture, women historically cut their hair in mourning and anger. This act became a crucial representation of the Women, Life, Freedom revolution, and now stands as a powerful symbol of the fight for liberty and equality worldwide.





Iran's security forces suppressed protests through torture, sexual assault, and killings. More than 500 people, including 70 children, were killed, as documented by Iranian human rights groups.



Aida Rostami, a physician, was killed by security forces for treating injured protesters during the protests.



Khodanur, killed in the protests, became a symbol of the movement with his viral Balouchi dance.



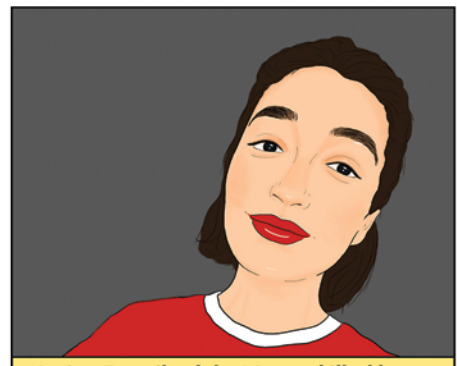
Ghazaleh Chalabi, a mountaineer, was killed by a gunshot to the head during the protests in northern Iran.



Nika Shakarami, 16, disappeared during the protests, and her family learned of her death ten days later.



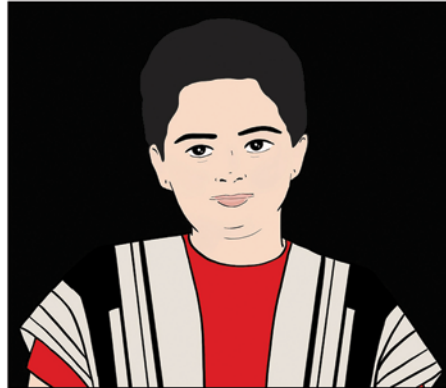
Hasti, 7, tragically suffocated after being struck on the head by a tear gas canister.



Sarina Esmailzadeh, 16, was killed by a severe beating of the baton on the head by the security forces.



Abolfazl, 17, skipped school to join protests but never returned home. He was fatally shot with a shotgun.



Kian, 9, was fatally shot when authorities fired at his family's car, seriously injuring his father too.

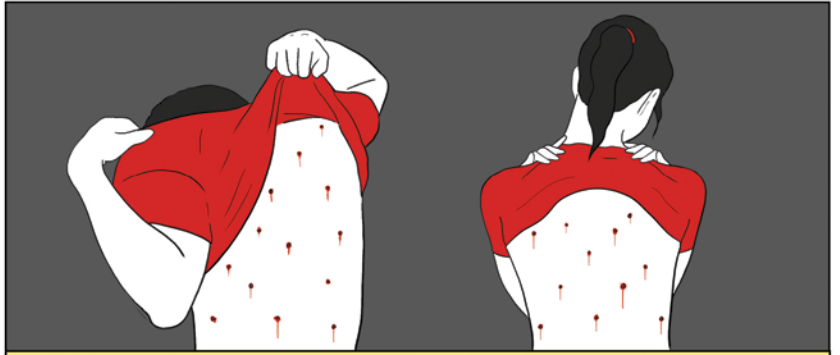


Amir Ali, who was only 2 years old, was killed after special forces opened fire at the car carrying him and his family.

In addition to fatalities among protesters, security forces caused injuries to hundreds of individuals through the use of live ammunition, metal pellets, and teargas.

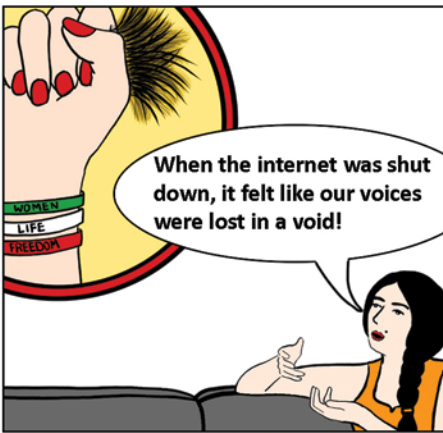


Women at protests were targeted with shotgun fire to faces, breasts, and genitals. Doctors noted gender-specific injuries.



Protesters suffered devastating wounds from birdshot pellets fired at close range by security forces. Viral photos showed individuals with numerous tiny "shot" balls embedded deeply in their flesh.

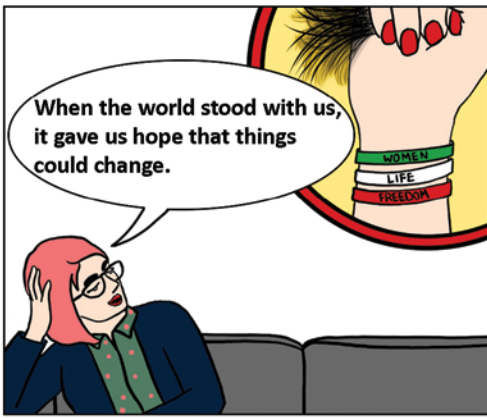
Authorities attempted to suppress surging protests by cutting off internet access and restricting social media platforms, vital for recording public opposition.



Global crowds rallied in major cities to support Iran's protests and denounce the crackdown on demonstrations. Echoing the uprising in Iran, they chanted "Women, life, freedom!"

Limited or no internet access in Iran made international support vital in amplifying the messages of the Iranian people and magnifying the impact of their actions.





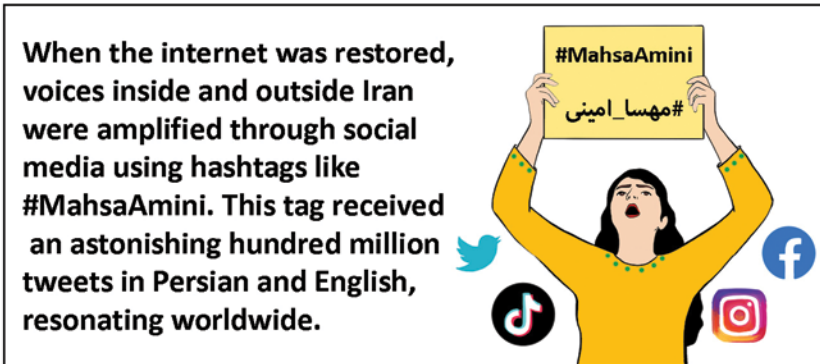
The Iranian demonstrations captured international focus, and the protests received widespread backing from the global public.

Global solidarity energized us, knowing millions stood by our side.

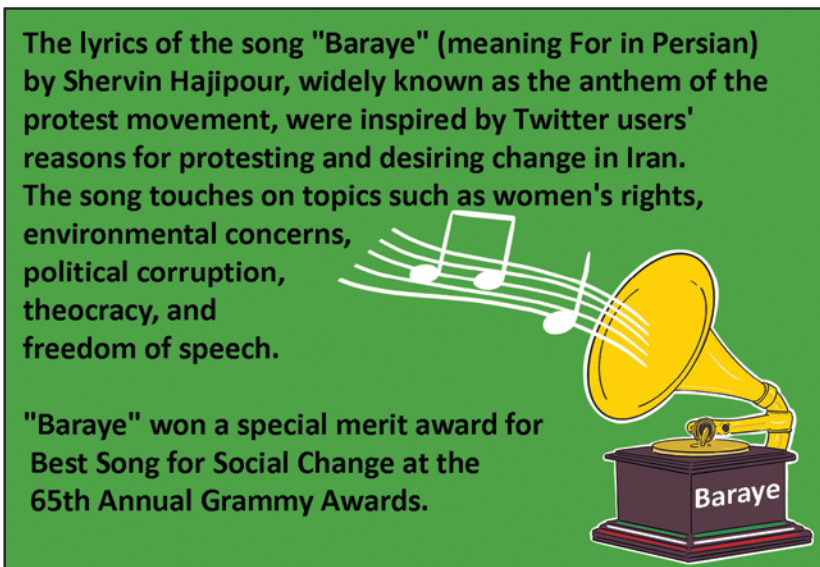
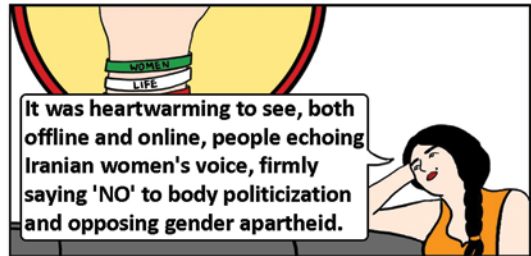


For several days, Iranian women have been at the forefront of media attention, as their stories, determination, and pivotal role in shaping the protests received extensive coverage.

Many global feminist and human rights groups actively supported the protests and advocated for the rights of women and all Iranians.



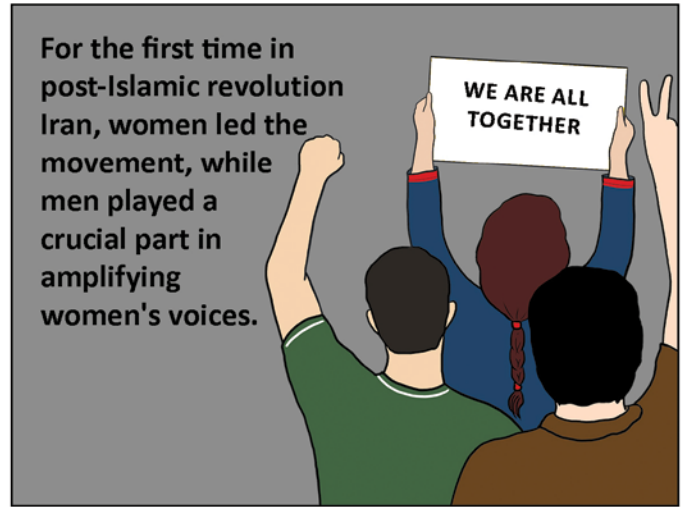
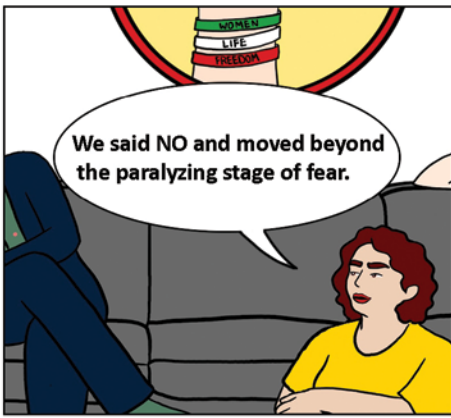
When the internet was restored, voices inside and outside Iran were amplified through social media using hashtags like #MahsaAmini. This tag received an astonishing hundred million tweets in Persian and English, resonating worldwide.



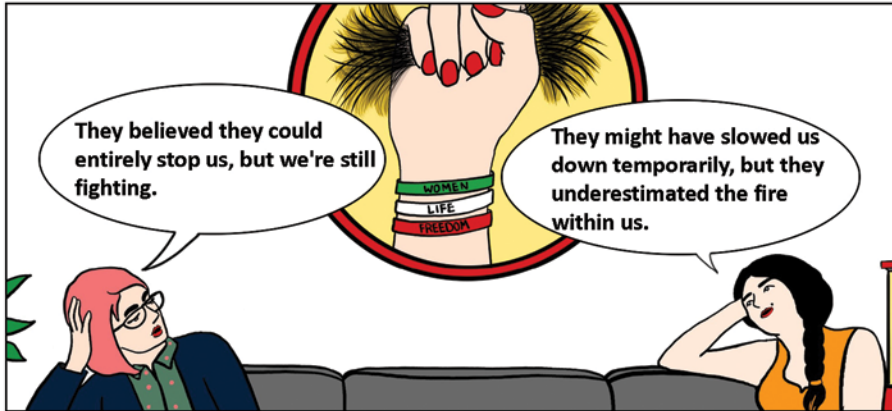
The lyrics of the song "Baraye" (meaning For in Persian) by Shervin Hajipour, widely known as the anthem of the protest movement, were inspired by Twitter users' reasons for protesting and desiring change in Iran. The song touches on topics such as women's rights, environmental concerns, political corruption, theocracy, and freedom of speech.

"Baraye" won a special merit award for Best Song for Social Change at the 65th Annual Grammy Awards.





A lethal crackdown and a struggling economy have stopped public protests after months. But the spirit of rebellion and civil disobedience still thrives on the streets and social media.



The regime cannot fully quell the fight, as the Women, Life, Freedom movement is guided by numerous heroes and symbols rather than a conventional leader, with many of them being young women.



We are on a journey.
Each step forward is small, but each is a move away from oppression and towards freedom.





YOU WILL NEVER WALK ALONE

*The Story of Türkiye's
Withdrawal from the
Istanbul Convention*

Selen Sarikaya Eren

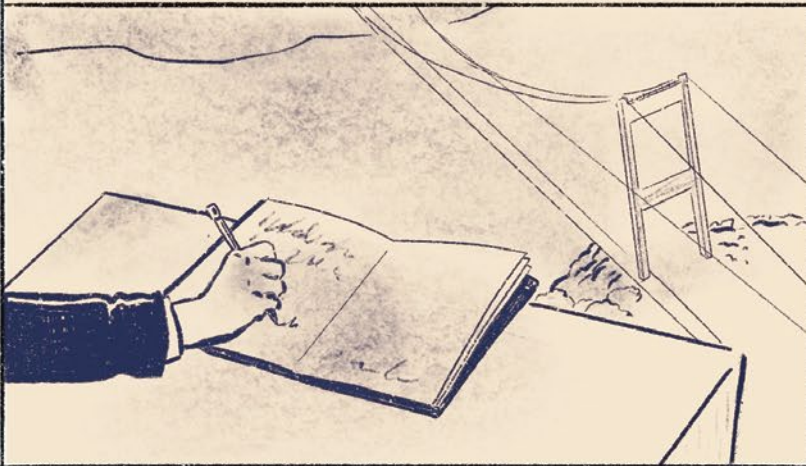


You Will Never Walk Alone:

The Story of Turkiye's Withdrawal
from the Istanbul Convention

by Selen Sarikaya Eren

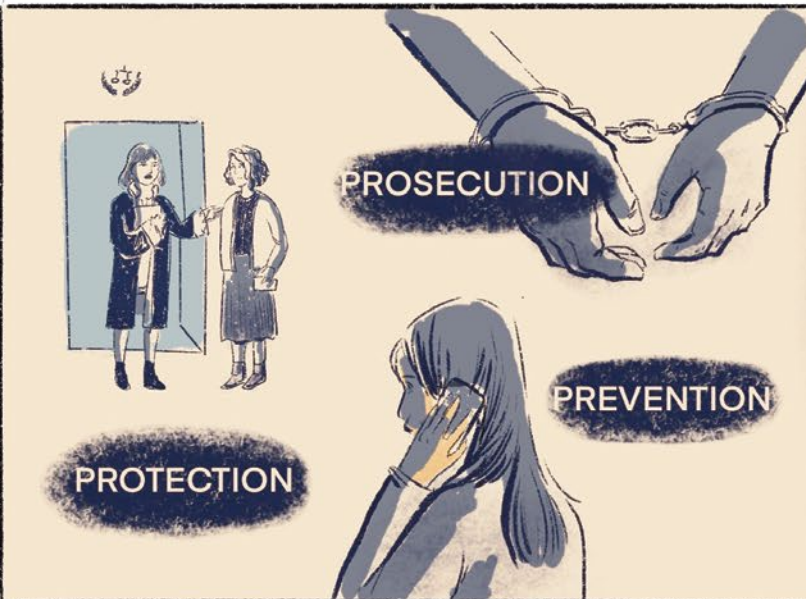
The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention, was opened for signature on May 11, 2011, in Istanbul. It was the result of decades-long continuous efforts to prevent gender-based violence. Turkiye was the first to ratify the Convention.



37 countries followed.



The Convention was the first in setting legally binding standards for responding to the needs of victims and those at risk. It provided:



CO-ORDINATED POLICIES



The effectiveness of the Convention stems from its definition of domestic violence as gender-based violence. It states that the cause for domestic violence is gender inequality, and not individuals. As such, the Convention proposes policies that promote changes in social and cultural life.

Before the Convention, Turkiye was criticized by CEDAW due to shortcomings in domestic violence regulations, as well as the pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes. It was ranked 131st among 144 countries, in terms of gender equality in 2017. In 2009, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Turkiye failed to address domestic violence as a form of gender-based discrimination in the *Opuz v. Turkey* case.



This landmark decision drove Turkiye to spend significant efforts towards the Convention. Government officials expressed pride in being the first to sign and ratify the Convention. A new law called 6284 was created based on the Convention with the efforts of feminist activists and organizations. It prioritized the protection of women and broadened the scope of protection.

However, the implementation of the Convention and law 6284 was hardly sufficient. The government relied on so-called cultural, traditional, and religious norms to deploy problematic policies against gender equality, which was in stark contradiction to the Convention's requirement to ensure that custom, culture, and tradition were not justifications for acts of violence. Officials made controversial remarks such as that the only career for a woman should be womanhood.



After the adaptation of 6284, state consultations with women's organizations came to an end. Women's organizations and feminists were increasingly demonized, excluded, and harassed. Women's marches, especially the Women's Day March, were suppressed, while several NGOs were closed.*



In June 2020, for the first time, President Erdoğan stated the possibility of withdrawing from Turkiye's commitment to the Convention. Previously, the Turkiye Thinking Platform had presented the president with a report that claimed the Istanbul Convention damaged the institution of family and urged for the withdrawal.

Bolded by the statement, several conservative groups increased their criticism of the Convention. Some framed the Convention as a Western imperialistic document that was trying to dismantle the traditional structure of the family. Others were against the concept of gender equality, a concept they deemed was against religion. The effectiveness of the Convention was also questioned.



LGBTQI+ individuals were targeted by numerous political and religious figures who claimed the Convention secretly aimed at paving the way for homosexuality.



While the withdrawal from the Convention was being discussed, 27 year old Pınar Gültekin was murdered by her ex-boyfriend. Pınar was one of the 300 femicide victims in Turkiye in 2020.**



Femicides have been increasing in Turkiye since the 2000s.

In 2009, the murder of high school student Münevver Karabulut shocked the Turkish public and led to a massive backlash.

The We Will Stop Femicides Platform was established as a response.

Unfortunately, except for the year when the Istanbul Convention was signed, the numbers kept increasing every year.

*The Advocates for Human Rights
 **We Will Stop Femicides Platform

Although there were problems with the implementation of the Convention, its mere existence had deterring effects on domestic violence.



Law 6284 kept the state responsible for preventing femicides and domestic violence. It provided a mechanism to pressure the courts to conduct effective investigations and prosecutions.



Leaving the Convention would only embolden men to turn to violence.



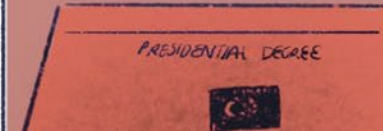
Despite the push from conservative groups, there was little public support for the withdrawal. In July 2020, #challengeaccepted, a campaign to protest femicides, turned into global support for the Convention amidst the discussions.



There were protests for the 6284 to be enforced effectively. However, Turkiye went in the completely opposite direction.



In March 2021, a presidential decree announced that Turkiye would withdraw from the Istanbul Convention.



We reject the withdrawal.
Istanbul Convention is fully in force.

Women's Coalition and Women's Platform for Equality immediately came together and objected to the decision.*

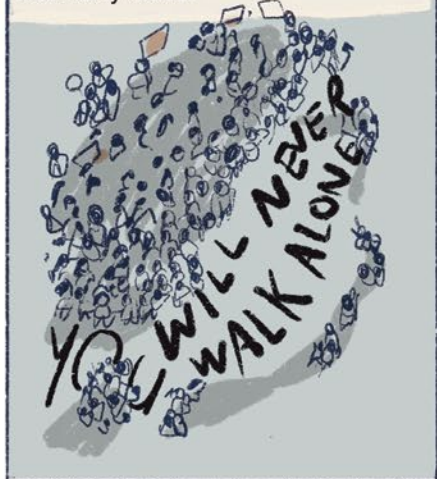


International organizations and institutions such as UN Women and the European Council criticized the withdrawal.

Devastating news and a huge setback.
We urge Turkiye to reconsider.
This is a pushback against women's rights.



While various bar associations declared that the withdrawal would be against the law, women and LGBTQI+ started protesting in more than forty cities.



*Women for Women's Human Rights - New Ways

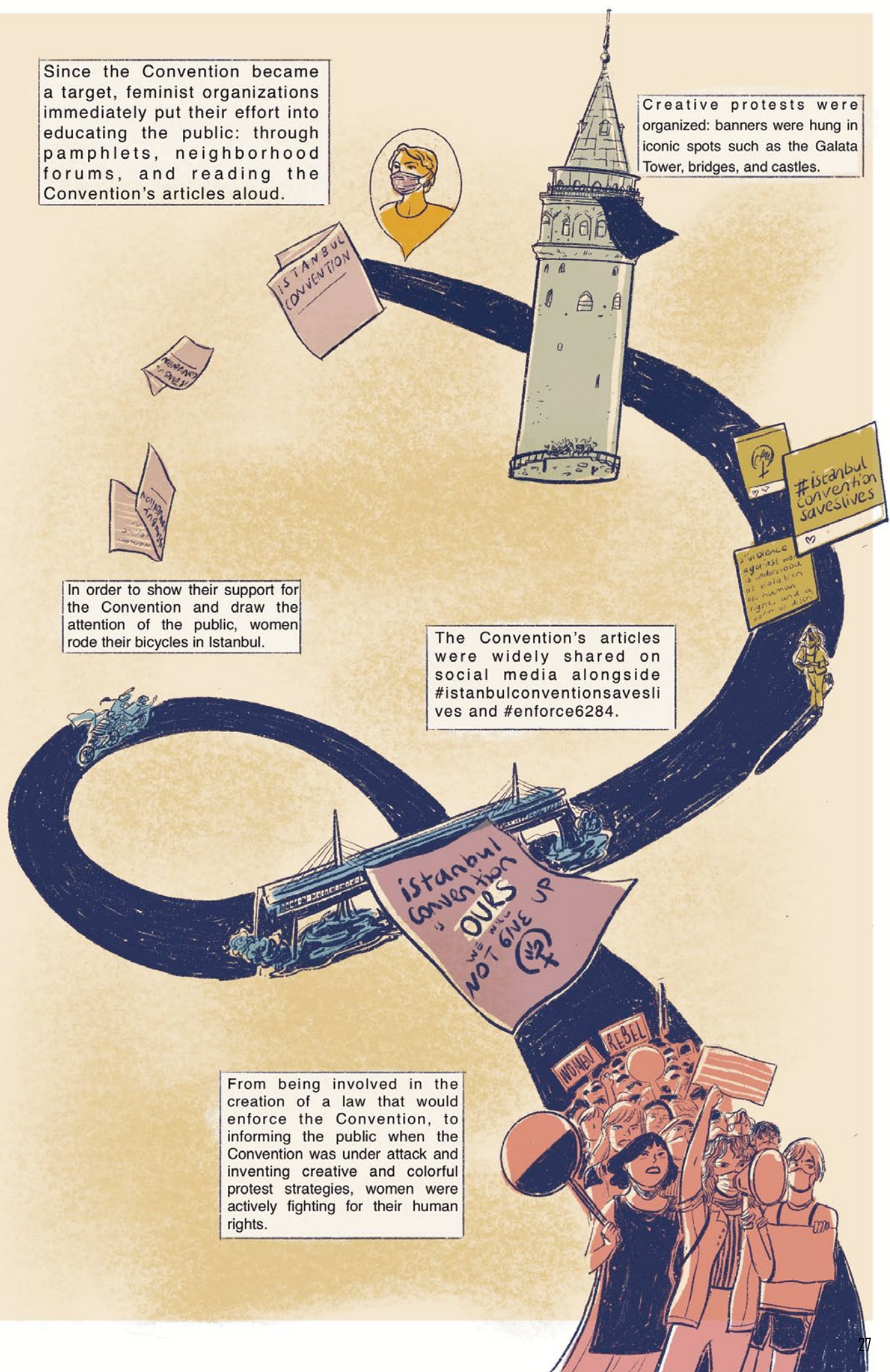
Since the Convention became a target, feminist organizations immediately put their effort into educating the public: through pamphlets, neighborhood forums, and reading the Convention's articles aloud.

Creative protests were organized: banners were hung in iconic spots such as the Galata Tower, bridges, and castles.

In order to show their support for the Convention and draw the attention of the public, women rode their bicycles in Istanbul.

The Convention's articles were widely shared on social media alongside #istanbulconventionsaveslives and #enforce6284.

From being involved in the creation of a law that would enforce the Convention, to informing the public when the Convention was under attack and inventing creative and colorful protest strategies, women were actively fighting for their human rights.



Many learned about the Convention when it got controversial.



And joined the resistance.



MAKE PROFILE PICTURE



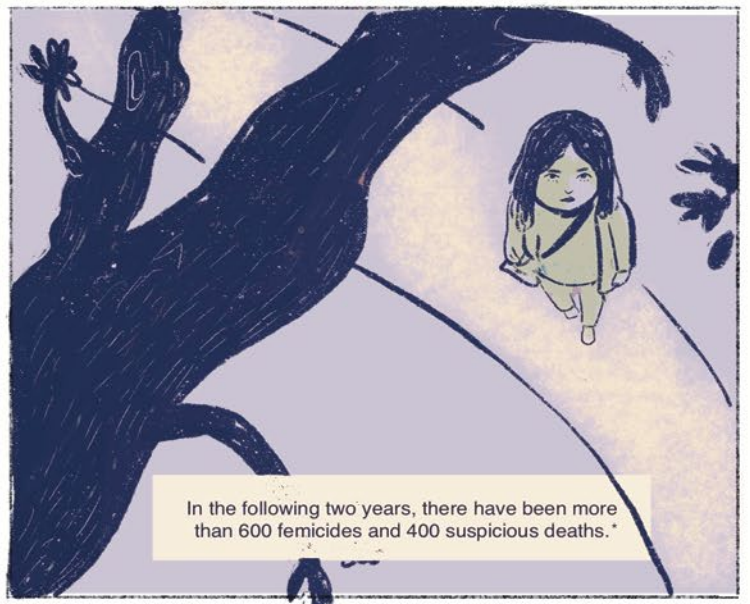


In July 2021, Turkiye officially withdrew from the Convention, regardless of the reactions and demands from the public.



By that point, it had become clear that the process was unfolding unjustly. The protestors were in the streets regardless.





A Soft Landing Place

Exploring disability justice in India



SONAKSHA



A Soft Landing Place:

Exploring Disability Justice in India

by Sonaksha



The first time I remember feeling sad about being sick was when I was 5.

I didn't want to be in bed anymore. I wanted to be in class, eating lunch with friends, listening to stories.



Years later, most of my days, like of many other disabled people, still center around my bed and a bouquet of heating pads. But now, we have somewhat of a love story.



Everything else feels too prickly and coarse when your body is screaming with pain and falling apart.

I'm not sure why they call it an invisible illness. Maybe it's because, for the rest of your life you will sit at doctors' offices in front of their doors, pleading to just be seen and heard, only to be told it's not real.



Or maybe it's an invisible illness because you're expected to shrink yourself to be in the world: don't occupy any space here.

For many years I didn't have the language to articulate my body, its crumbling, and the way it felt to stagger through the world.



I spent hours writing poems about feeling isolated when my migraines wouldn't leave.



I drew about staggering through the world, depersonalized.



I cried about waking up with my face on fire, and then felt embarrassed about not having a good enough morning routine.

But thanks to endless internet deep dives during pain flare ups, I came across so many sick and disabled people – talking, sharing, being, and crying together.



I didn't know this then, but one thing opened up into another and soon it felt like I'd found the map to a glorious garden.



Finding disability justice turned my most arid days into a blooming summer.



And on days I was sinking, which were so many – a soft landing place appeared.

"A disability justice framework understands that: all bodies are unique and essential; all bodies have strengths and needs that must be met; we are powerful, not despite the complexities of our bodies but because of them; all bodies are confided by ability, race, gender, sexuality, class, nation state, religion, and more, and we cannot separate them."*

Patty Berne, Sins Invalid, a disability justice-based performances project

*Sins Invalid: What is Disability Justice, sinsinvalid.org, 2020

Many years before I'd found disability justice, I'd stumbled into the feminist movement. And in many ways, it saved me. It was the first time I'd experienced the power of solidarity, youth leadership, and collective transformation. But it felt like there were a few missing pieces.



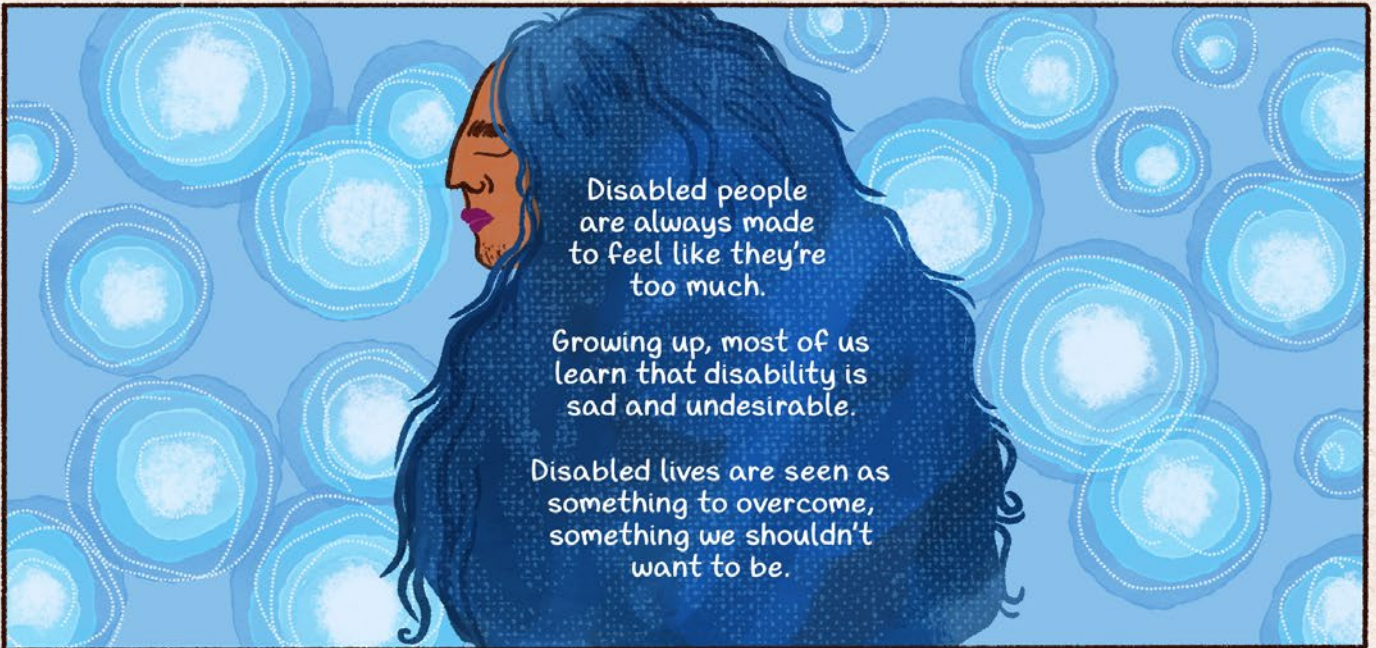
When I came to disability justice, I'd already realized the power of social movements. The ways in which we struggle, celebrate, hold each other and through it all keep moving – together. But I was dreaming of more.



Disabled people are always made to feel like they're too much.

Growing up, most of us learn that disability is sad and undesirable.

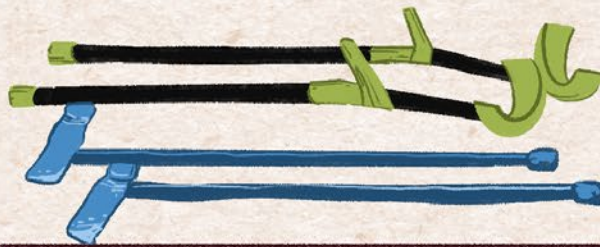
Disabled lives are seen as something to overcome, something we shouldn't want to be.



We rarely learn about our disabled elders and ancestors, and even if we do – it's under the guise of cures and inspiration porn. But what we long to know about are the ways they've paved the way with their generosity, ideas, and work towards the pursuit of creating disabled futures.



While the disability rights movement has done important and historical work in advancing the rights of people with disabilities, its framework does not include various forms of oppression.



Like Patty Berne, the founder of Sins Invalid says: "It centers people with mobility impairments, marginalizing other forms of impairment; and centers people who can achieve rights and access through a legal or rights-based framework."*



*Disability Justice: A working draft by Patty Berne, sinsinvalid.org

And the important question is: who does this leave out, how many of us does it invisibilize?



In response to this, disabled activists of colour: Patty Berne, Mia Mingus, Stacey Milbern, Leroy Moore, Eli Clare, and Sebastian Margaret began discussing a second wave of disability rights and launched a framework they called Disability Justice.



10 PRINCIPLES OF DISABILITY JUSTICE

intersectionality

Leadership of those most-affected

anti-capitalist politics

cross-movement solidarity

RECOGNIZING wholeness

sustainability

commitment to CROSS-DISABILITY solidarity

interdependence

collective access

collective liberation

*10 Principles of Disability Justice, sinsinvalid.org; Disability Liberated, Skin, Tooth and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People

Finding the language of disability justice was affirming in the ways it drew upon legacies of resistance.



It celebrates the work largely done by individuals within their own settings, but also highlights the importance of the leadership of queer and disabled people of colour.



But I was aching to find something closer to home. While the disability rights movement in India has a rich history, the disability justice movement is still in its nascent stages.



Discrimination and inequity cannot be understood by a single axis of identity. In India particularly, this also means evaluating the way experiences are varied across caste and class lines, in addition to gender, sexuality, religion, race, and ability.



And so, the emergence of disability justice on the path to liberation is crucial.

With a map to the glorious garden in my hand, I wandered through nooks, crannies, and fragments of erased histories, exploring sparks of the slow and steady building of a disability justice movement in India.



Shivangi Agrawal, a queer and disabled artist and activist, spoke about the way caregivers or family members of people with disabilities occupy a lot of space and lead many initiatives in the disability movement in India.



"That is not our voice, and in fact so many of us are abused by our caregivers and biological families."



Nidhi Goyal, a disabled feminist activist, stand-up comic, and the founder of Rising Flame articulates how safety includes accessibility, and the ways in which gender, violence and disability are intertwined.

"For many people, home is considered a safe space, and so the violence that goes on at home is either not recognized...or there is no possibility of an exit."*



The reality, like Nidhi says, is that "We don't consider that seeking consent from a disabled woman is required at all."



*Nirantar Video, Disability, Gender, Violence, Home and the City, The Third Eye Portal

There is no disability justice without access, but the shifts in how we understand and expand this access are essential. Disabled feminist, writer, researcher, and educator Srinidhi Raghavan, in her column for Firstpost said: "To a large extent, we find that non-disabled people view the entirety of the disabled experience through the lens of dependence."*



*Interdependence should be valued beyond disabled community, Srinidhi Raghavan, Firstpost

Every day we're told that our sick and disabled bodies are a punishment to those around us. We're seen as burdens, and so it's not strange that so many of us internalize these messages.



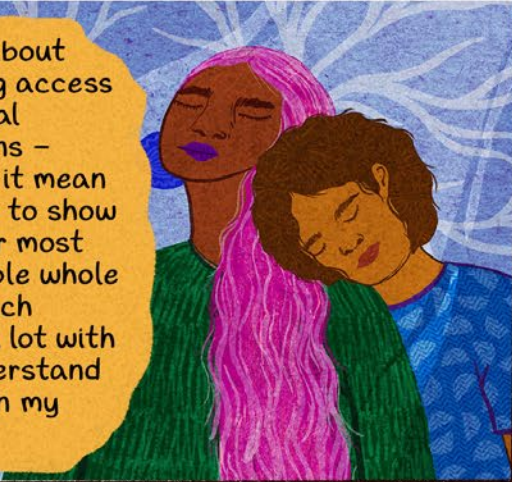
But I'm dreaming of a world where we're able to cultivate interdependence as a gentle yet fierce response to this deeply entrenched ableism.

As Mia Mingus says: "Interdependence moves us away from the myth of independence, and towards relationships where we are all valued and have things to offer."

And every time I've been in community with other disabled and queer people, I've witnessed the ways in which interdependence is transformative.

Kim Fernandes, a disabled, queer researcher, writer, and educator reflected on overlaps in the ways they think of disability justice and feminism.

"It's also about prioritizing access in individual interactions – what does it mean for people to show up as their most comfortable whole selves, which overlaps a lot with how I understand feminism in my own life."



In 2019, Rising Flame, a nonprofit based in India, launched 'I Can Lead', a first of its kind national leadership program for women with disabilities in India.



There's something so powerful about spaces built and led by and for disabled people.

Through the program, fellows articulated their positions on feminism and disability justice, received mentorship, increased visibility by publishing their writing and took political action.



"The underlying thread through it all was the feeling that we're not alone. I knew that I could come back to this community whenever I was ready, and find the same connection."*

O Aishwarya, I Can Lead Fellow

Collective liberation that leaves no one behind is built on engaging with each other, sharing responsibility, and working together to meet each other's needs. It's about pacing ourselves, but showing up when and as we can, sometimes with solutions, and sometimes just to be frustrated together.



Dr. Aiswarya Rao, public health consultant and founder of Better World Shelter for Women with Disabilities, shared about going to church simply because it's a community space.



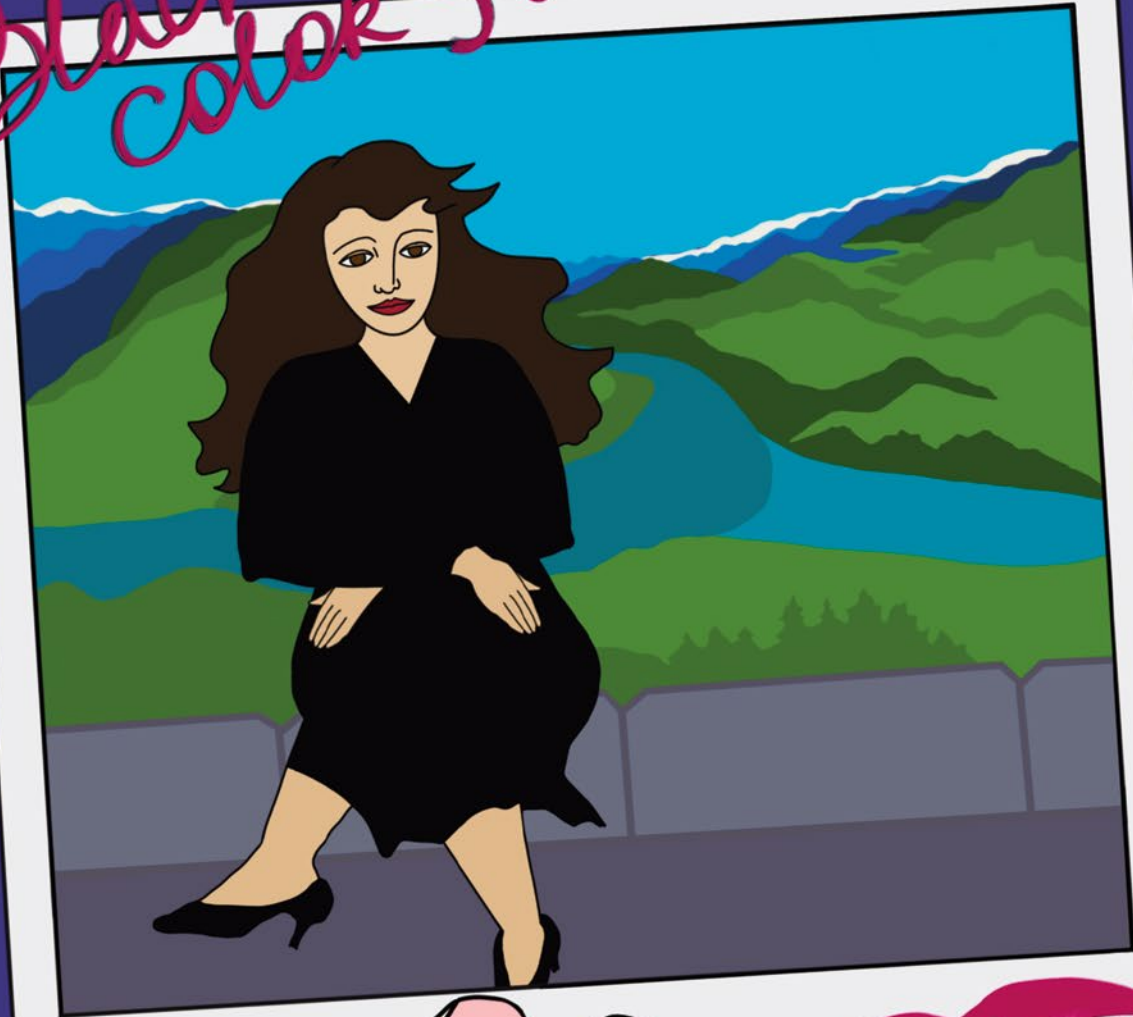
She further explains: "When we go out of our way, and allow ourselves to be involved in matters that affect those in the community, there is a certain amount of self-healing too."*

*Blending Art, Friendship & Advocacy: A Conversation with Dr. Aiswarya Rao by Greeshma Kuthar, No Niin Issue 17

Disability justice is expansive: for Shivangi it looks like getting together with their disabled and queer friends sitting on the bed together, for Kim, it was having their world split open with possibilities. For me, it has meant looking for doctors for each other, laying on heating pads together, emergency food delivery, and flowers on pain days.

Because like Mia Mingus says, disability justice is after all simply another term for love.

Our
black
color 90s



1997

Salomeya Bauer

Our Black Color 90s

by Salomeya Bauer

I love the black color.
It has a special meaning
for me. To understand and
accept it, you have to be
a grown-up. Children
cannot understand it.

Public school

MY MOM IS THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN
THE WORLD!

MY MOM HAS
THE LONGEST,
MOST BEAUTIFUL
HAIR!

NO, MY
MOM IS!

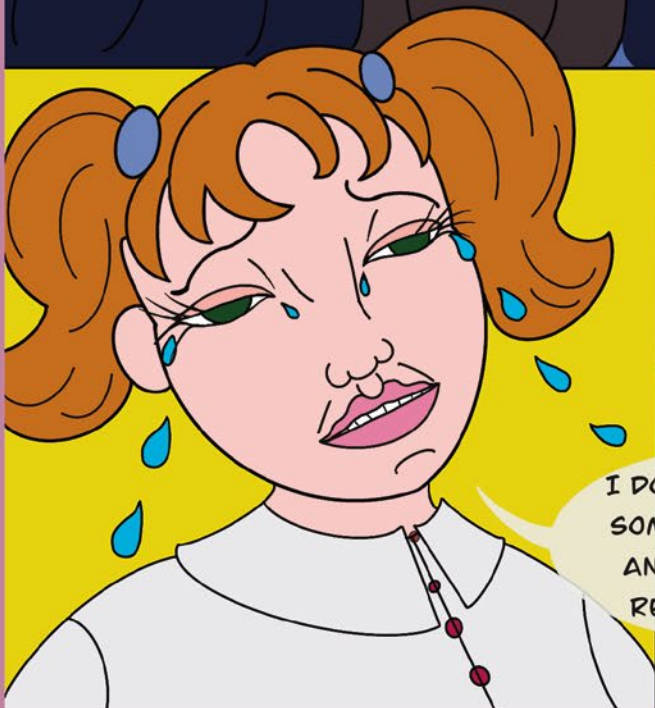
MY MOM HAS
SHORT HAIR
LIKE BOYS
AND I LIKE IT!

WOW! I WANT
TO SEE HER!

SURE! I WANT TO
SEE YOUR MOM TOO.
WHERE IS SHE?

MOM! MOM,
WHERE ARE YOU?

DON'T WORRY,
SHE'S GOT TO BE
AROUND HERE
SOMEWHERE!



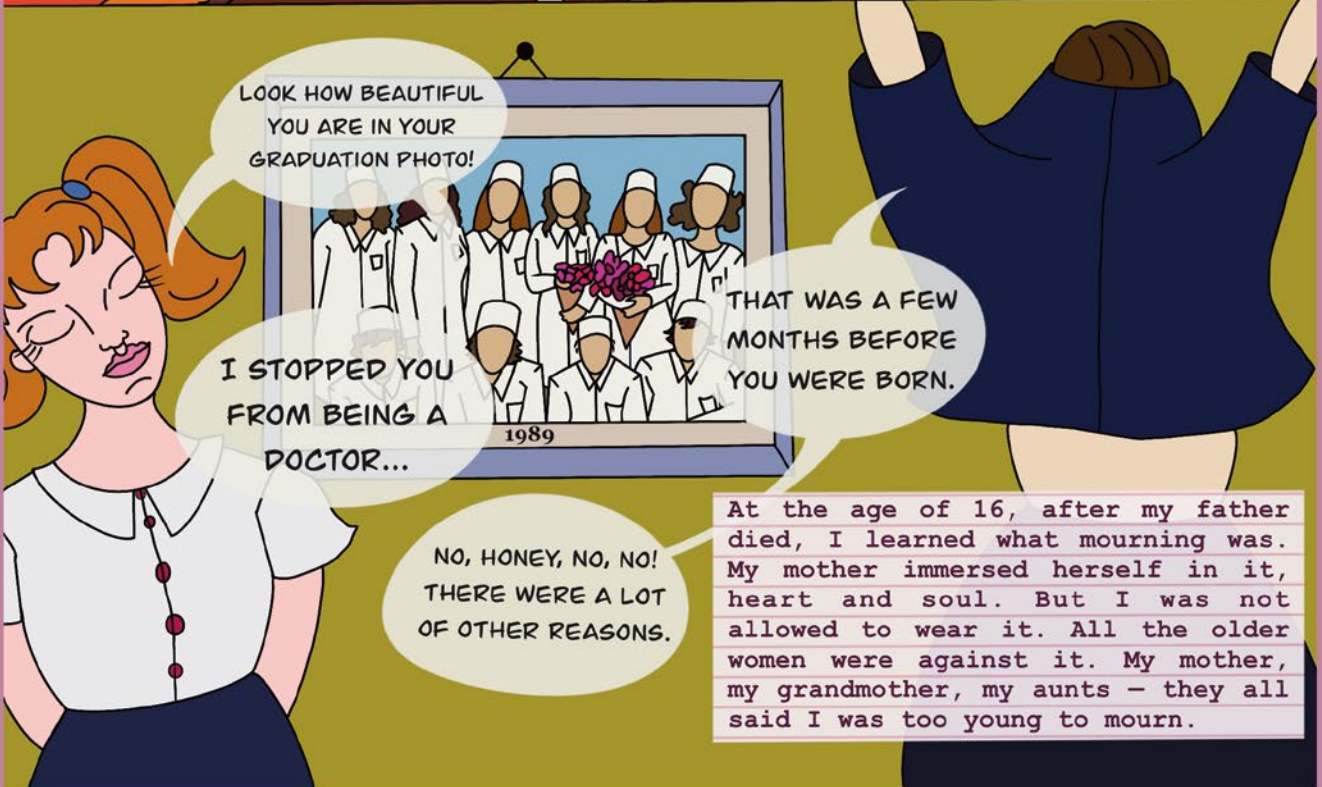
I DON'T REMEMBER,
SOMETHING BLACK.
AND NOW I CAN'T
RECOGNIZE HER.

WHAT IS SHE
WEARING TODAY?



The black color seemed to me to be the particular choice of older women. Since my childhood, I have been seeing my grandmother in black - all the time. It had been stored in my consciousness.

I did not know or understand a lot of things. Thanks to my kin, life was like a holiday for all the children in our family. Therefore, the grandmother in black was not associated with tragedy, but only with her honorable status as the eldest in the family.



At the age of 16, after my father died, I learned what mourning was. My mother immersed herself in it, heart and soul. But I was not allowed to wear it. All the older women were against it. My mother, my grandmother, my aunts - they all said I was too young to mourn.

In April 1989, a group of activists gathered in front of the Georgian Parliament in Tbilisi. They went on hunger strike and demanded that the authorities prevent Abkhazia's secession from Georgia. The Soviet Union was falling apart and the nations were hungry for freedom. Thousands of people came out to support the activists. Among them were women and children, students, and pensioners. The people were now demanding Georgia's secession from the USSR.

The authorities flooded the streets with a flammable mixture, expecting that someone would throw a burning cigarette under their feet and start a fire. But the protesters noticed this.

The authorities appealed to the Kremlin for help and called in the Soviet army. On the night of April 9, soldiers violently dispersed the crowd within 15 minutes. The military used chemical weapons and beat unarmed protesters. 21 people were killed – mostly women. They became victims of the struggle for the freedom and independence of Georgia, while April 9 became carved into the collective memory of Georgians.

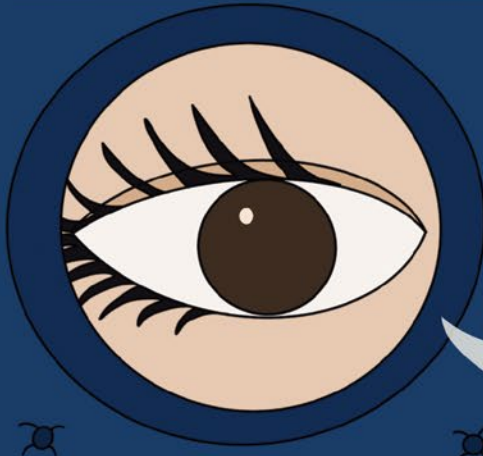
In 1991, the leader of the protest, and later the first democratically elected president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, organized a referendum and Georgians decided to restore the constitution of 1918. Georgia gained its long-awaited independence, although it was followed by a struggle for power, civil war, and famine. Criminal gangs seized power. These dark times in Georgian history are referred to as the times of the Mkhedrioni*.



I think that no one in Georgia can unequivocally answer why almost everyone preferred black clothes in the 90s. The black color carried information about the person wearing it. Undoubtedly, the black color was a symbol, a tribute, and a seal of grief for the loss of loved ones. In the 90s, a huge number of families suffered irreparable losses.

*The Mkhedrioni was a paramilitary group known for its high-profile involvement in the Georgian Civil War (1991 - 1993) and the War in Abkhazia (1992 - 1993). The group's name means "horsemen" or "knights". Members of the Mkhedrioni took an oath to defend Georgia, its people, and Church. The Mkhedrioni's members gained a reputation for being heavily armed thugs who engaged in violence and intimidation. It has been outlawed since 1995.

However, black entered our lives for quite different reasons and settled down for many years. In the 90s, crime and lawlessness reigned in Georgia. The law and power passed into the hands of gangs. They called themselves the Mkhedrioni. Shrouded in terror and mystery, they carried their image with absolute confidence to the masses.



WHAT DO YOU WANT?

PLEASE OPEN UP! MY FRIEND HAS A HEART CONDITION. WE WERE TOLD YOU'RE A DOCTOR AND CAN HELP.



WHERE'S MAKHO?

I HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. IT'S JUST ME AND MY DAUGHTER HERE.

WAIT, DO YOU HEAR A NOISE IN THE ENTRYWAY? THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE RIGHT APARTMENT. LET'S HURRY BEFORE HE GETS TOO FAR AWAY!

THEN WE'LL TAKE HER. SHE'LL STAY WITH US UNTIL HE SHOWS UP.

It was popular among teenagers to dream of becoming a Mkhedrioni, despite the cruel, inhumane conditions of initiation into the gang. Mkhedrioni wives were also "chosen" and capable of anything, just like their husbands.

The image of the members of the Mkhedrioni stood out. Their black color was a menace, inspiring fear and danger to any passerby.



WEREN'T YOU SCARED?

I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE FROM MKHEDRIONI. ONE OF THEM SAID HIS FRIEND WAS SICK AND NEEDED HELP.

SOME MAKHO.

WE DON'T HAVE ANY MAKHO IN OUR BUILDING. COULD IT BE KATO'S LOVER? SHE JUST GOT BACK FROM TURKEY.

AND YOU BELIEVED IT, YOU FOOL. SO WHO WERE THEY LOOKING FOR?

I WILL NOT JUDGE A WOMAN FOR TRYING TO EARN MONEY TO FEED HER CHILDREN, AND I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THAT KIND OF TALK IN MY HOUSE.

THAT'S RIGHT, I SAW HER YESTERDAY WITH SOME GUY. SHE WAS ALL DRESSED UP LIKE A TRAFFIC LIGHT. CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT?

WHAT A DISGRACE! WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY? SHE PROBABLY DOESN'T CARE, THOUGH. IT'S ALREADY CLEAR WITH PEOPLE LIKE HER.

OUR MEN ARE SAYING THE RIGHT THING: "LONG LIVE GEORGIAN WOMEN WHO HAVE NEVER TRAVELED TO TURKEY"!

I did not notice when I switched to black. Many women preferred it for practical reasons. When you do not have water and electricity at home, you do not think about the variety of your clothes.

I have always liked black. But then, 30 years ago, it was not about taste. I felt more protected, stronger, more confident in black. Many women felt this on a subconscious level and that is why they felt more comfortable in black clothes, which were appropriate in all situations.

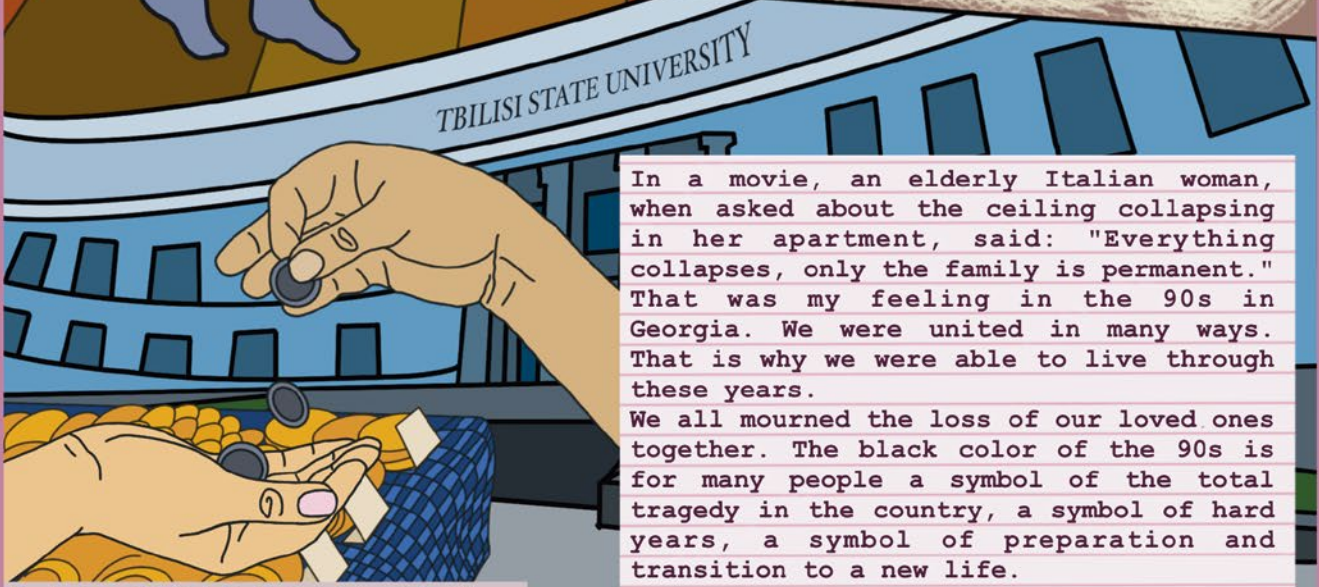
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF WOMEN BRING UP SUCH A MEN.

SHE'S CRAZY. WE'D BETTER STAY AWAY FROM HER.

THANKS FOR THE COFFEE, WE SHOULD GO.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN NEED TRAVELLING SHOES
DRIVE YOUR PROBLEMS FROM HERE
ALL GOOD PEOPLE READ GOOD BOOKS
NOW YOUR CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR*

MOM, PLEASE DON'T BE ANGRY, BUT NINO WAS VERY COLD AND I SWITCHED SHOES WITH HER.



In a movie, an elderly Italian woman, when asked about the ceiling collapsing in her apartment, said: "Everything collapses, only the family is permanent." That was my feeling in the 90s in Georgia. We were united in many ways. That is why we were able to live through these years. We all mourned the loss of our loved ones together. The black color of the 90s is for many people a symbol of the total tragedy in the country, a symbol of hard years, a symbol of preparation and transition to a new life.

*Lyrics from "Twist in My Sobriety" by Tanita Tikaram



After a small protest on March 8, 2017, calling for gender equality, some participants and their families began receiving death threats. To avoid being recognized, they had to change their appearance for a while, abandoning bright colors, again favoring black.

Parliament of Georgia



A counter-protest by a group of nationalists.

Georgian schoolchildren have a custom where they wear white shirts on the last day of class and write wishes and slogans on them as a memento.



Rally in support of women's rights and LGBTQ+





AURAT MARCH

SNIPPETS FROM PAKISTAN

KANZA NAHEED

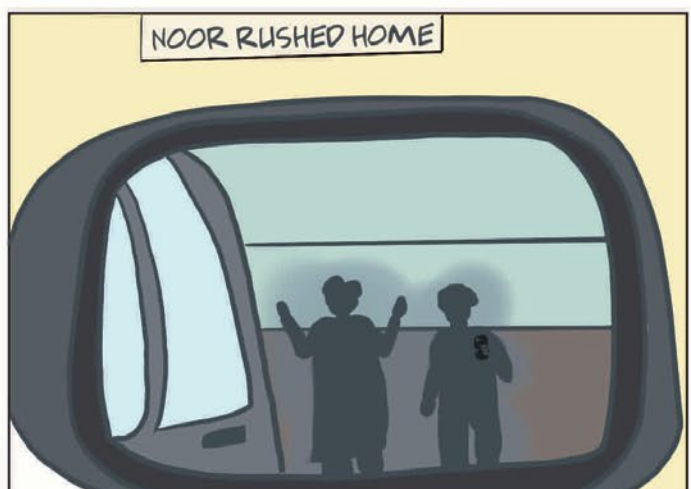
Aurat March:

Snippets from Pakistan

by Kanza Naheed



ONE DAY NOOR WAS DRIVING BACK FROM WORK...

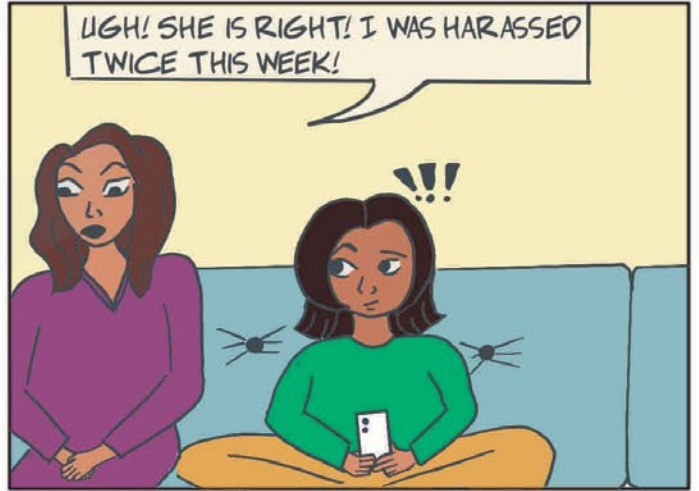




HER MOM AND SISTER SHIZZA, WERE WATCHING THE NEWS.



PAKISTAN HAS BEEN RANKED AS ONE OF THE TOP 10 UNSAFEST COUNTRIES FOR WOMEN IN THE WORLD..



UGH! SHE IS RIGHT! I WAS HARASSED TWICE THIS WEEK!



I TOLD YOU NOT TO STAY OUT LATE AT NIGHT.. WE CAN ONLY CONTROL OUR OWN ACTIONS, NOT CHANGE THE SYSTEM..



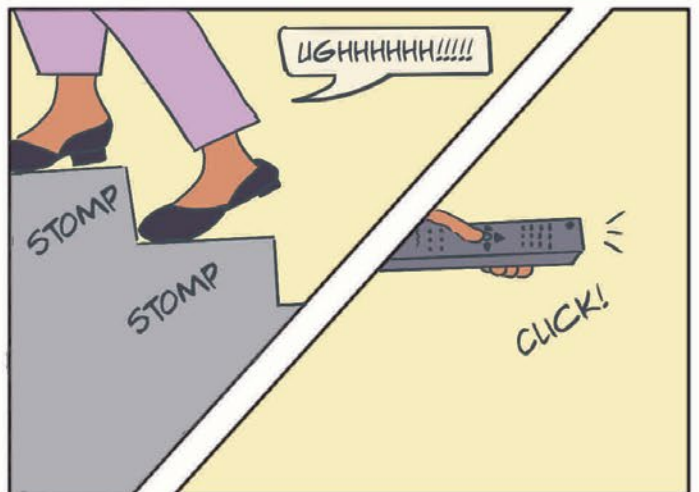
SO I SHOULD NEVER LEAVE THE HOUSE!?! THIS IS SOOOO UNFAIR!! IM SICK OF THIS MAA!!! UGH!!!



I JUST WANT HER TO STAY SAFE!

HOW DO I MAKE HER UNDERSTAND..

SIGH...

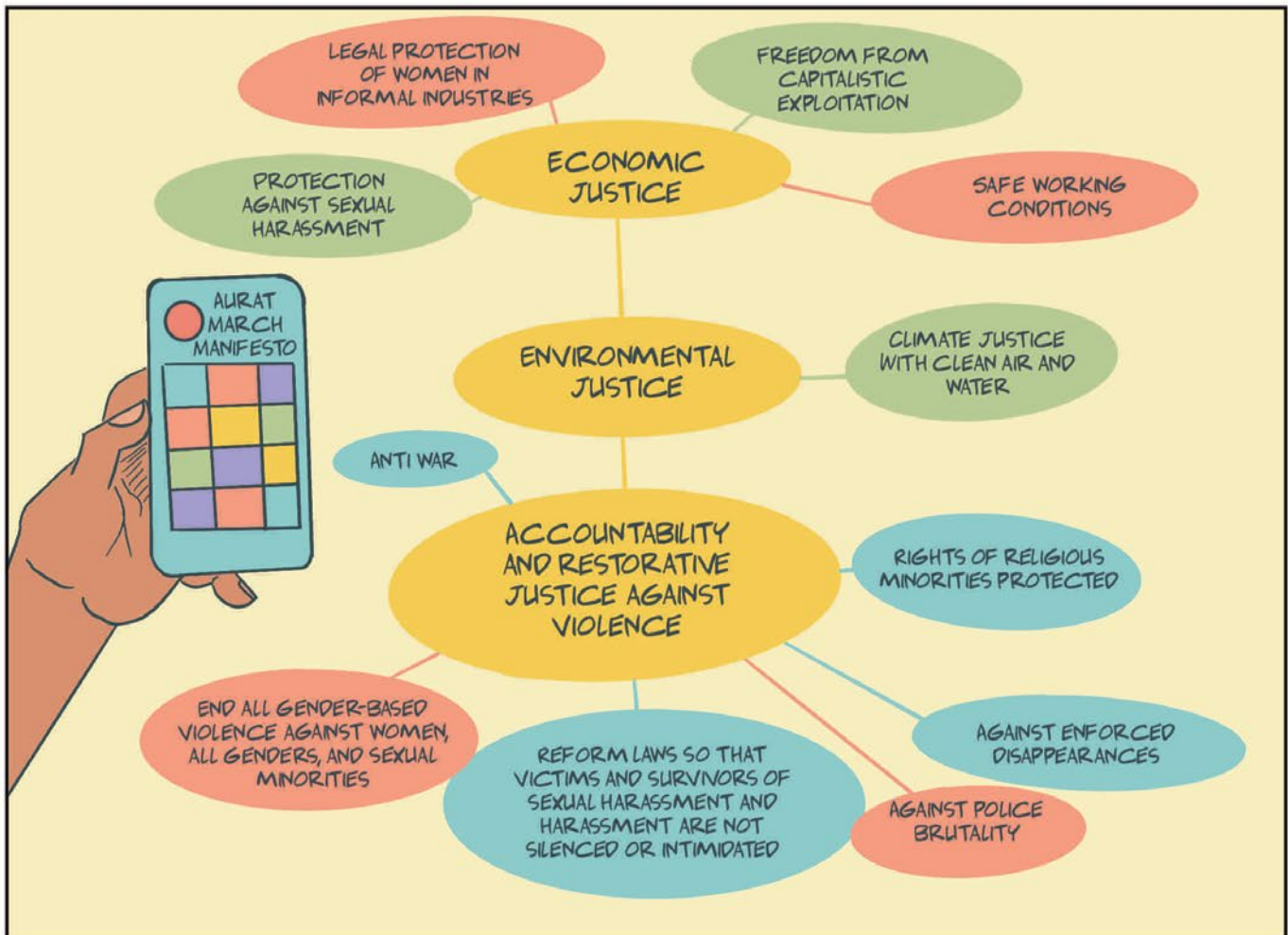


UGHHHHHH!!!!

STOMP

STOMP

CLICK!





AURAT MARCH WAS INITIATED IN 2018 BY A FEW WOMEN IN KARACHI WHO DECIDED TO PROTEST AGAINST VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT AGAINST WOMEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY ON MARCH 8TH.

SEEING THE POSTS FOR MEET UP ON SOCIAL MEDIA, THE WOMEN IN LAHORE ALSO STARTED TO MOBILISE LIKE-MINDED WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MARCH.

THE WORD 'AURAT', MEANING 'WOMAN' IN URDU, WAS CONSCIOUSLY CHOSEN TO VERNACULARIZE THE MOVEMENT LOCALLY AND TO MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE TO WOMEN FROM ALL SECTIONS OF SOCIETY.

EVEN THE MANIFESTOS EACH YEAR ARE PUBLISHED IN BOTH URDU AND ENGLISH.



AURAT MARCH (AM) RECEIVES CRITICISM FOR BEING A MOVEMENT BY THE PRIVILEGED WOMEN OF PAKISTAN. BUT NOT MANY CRITICS ARE AWARE THAT THE AURAT MARCH ORGANISING TEAM CONNECTS WITH WOMEN FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE.

FOR INSTANCE, THE FISHING COMMUNITIES IN SINDH, WOMEN IN VILLAGES, WOMEN FROM RELIGIOUS MINORITIES, AND OF COURSE WITH WOMEN FROM AFFLUENT BACKGROUNDS, ENCOURAGING THEM TO PARTICIPATE AND MOBILISE THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES. WE CAN SEE THIS EFFORT REPRESENTED IN HOW THE MOVEMENT HAS GROWN IN ONLY 6 YEARS.

2018

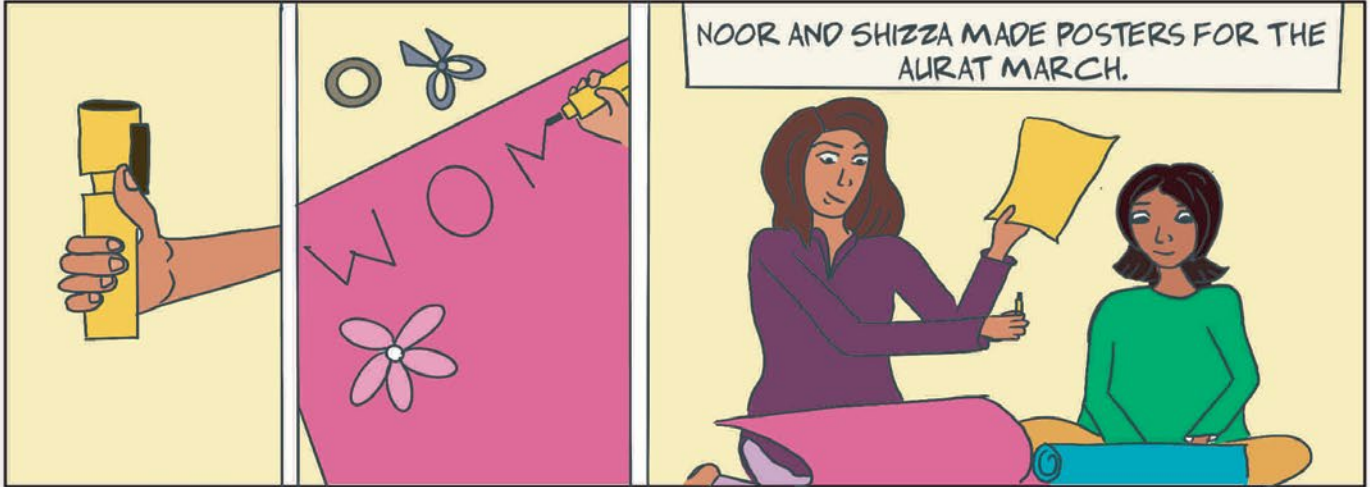


THE FIRST YEAR OF THE AURAT MARCH HAD AROUND 500 ATTENDEES IN TWO MAJOR CITIES

2023



IN ONLY 6 YEARS AURAT MARCH HAS GAINED ENOUGH MOMENTUM WHERE APPROXIMATELY 10,000 WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS ACROSS MORE THAN 8 CITIES IN PAKISTAN EVERY YEAR



UPON REACHING THE MARCH NOOR AND HER FAMILY WERE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED. THE ELECTRIC ATMOSPHERE, THE WOMEN CHANTING AZADI (FREEDOM), THE RUSH OF ADRENALINE MADE THEM START CHANTING WITH THE PROTESTORS.



THE FUNERAL OF THE PATRIARCHY

THIS WAS ONE OF THE FIRST ART INSTALLATIONS THAT WAS CREATED TO DRIVE IMPACT. ORGANISED AT THE FIRST AURAT MARCH IN 2018, IT WAS A SYMBOLIC GESTURE TO SHOWCASE THAT THE WOMEN WERE NOW IN CHARGE AND WOULD NOT TOLERATE THE PATRIARCHY ANYMORE.





THE STAINS OF PATRIARCHY

THIS ART INSTALLATION DREW ATTENTION TO EVERYDAY ENCOUNTERS WOMEN HAD WITH THE PATRIARCHY. WOMEN WERE ASKED TO WRITE THE AGE WHEN THEY EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR DENIAL OF FREEDOM.

"THE RAPIST IS YOU!!!"

THIS SONG WAS TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL CHILEAN SONG BY THE SAME NAME INTO URDU AND PERFORMED AT THE KARACHI AURAT MARCH.

THE SONG AND PERFORMANCE WAS PREPARED WELL BEFORE THE MARCH AND ACTED OUT BY THE PARTICIPANTS.



"MERA JISM, MERI MARZI" (MY BODY MY CHOICE)

THIS PARTICULAR SIGN CAUSED A NATIONAL UPROAR WITHIN THE COUNTRY. FROM TELEVISION ANCHORS AND MEN ON THE STREETS, TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

THE SIGN WAS SEEN AS VULGAR, LEWD, AND PROVOCATIVE, ESPECIALLY BY CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE SOCIETY. THE LOCAL CONTEXT OF THIS SIGN, HOWEVER, WAS MORE IN LINE WITH FORBIDDING CHILD MARRIAGES, FORCEFUL MARRIAGES, AND THE RIGHT TO NOT BE RAPED.



APNA KHANA
KHUD GARAM
KARO!!!



WARM YOUR OWN FOOD!

THIS WAS ANOTHER CONTROVERSIAL POSTER THAT CHALLENGED ESTABLISHED GENDER-NORMS.

BY ASKING MEN TO WARM THEIR OWN DINNER, WOMEN STARTED CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO, SHOWING MEN THAT INSTEAD OF TAKING THE SUBVERSIVE ROLE IN THE HOUSE, THE DIVISION OF LABOUR SHOULD BE MORE EQUAL.

THIS MESSAGE BECAME A BONE OF CONTENTION FOR MANY AND THE MAKERS OF IT WERE ACCUSED OF DESTROYING SOCIETY'S FABRIC.

IMPACT OF THE AURAT MARCH

ABANDONMENT OF
THE TWO FINGER
TEST FOR RAPE
VICTIMS

SEXUAL HARASSMENT
LAW MODIFIED TO
INCLUDE MORE THAN
JUST WORKPLACE

MOORAT MARCH (MARCH
BY TRANS AND NON-BINARY
INDIVIDUALS) WAS ORGANISED
TO PROTEST AGAINST THE
GOVERNMENT



POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS
BUILT IN SOCIETY TO
QUESTION THE STATE

PROHIBITING VICTIM
BLAMING BY GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS

DISCUSSION ABOUT
WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND ROLES
THROUGHOUT THE
COUNTRY



PARTICIPATING IN THE AURAT MARCH TAUGHT NOOR AND HER FAMILY HOW CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO IS ALWAYS WORTH IT! WE HOPE THAT ONE DAY WE CAN SEE A PAKISTAN THAT BECOMES A MORE EQUAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN.

THE LAST STAND



CHELWEK

The Last Stand

by Chelwek

THE YEAR IS 1954. THE BRITISH HAVE PUT A STATE OF EMERGENCY ON THEIR COLONY KENYA AFTER THE "MAU MAU" UPRISING THAT SOUGHT INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RULE BY AFRICANS. MUTHONI WA KIRIMA LEADS AN AMBUSH. MUTHONI HAD A DISTRESSING ENCOUNTER AT A SETTLER'S FARM THAT WAS MARKED BY PHYSICAL AND VERBAL VIOLENCE AGAINST KIKUYU MEN, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST KIKUYU WOMEN. THIS LED HER TO TAKE THE OATH OF THE "MAU MAU" FREEDOM FIGHTERS. SHE ATE SOME EARTH AND SWORE TO FIGHT FOR LAND.

IN THE FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE, WOMEN PROVIDED SUPPORT TO FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN THE FORESTS: HIDING THEM, PROVIDING INTELLIGENCE, AND SUPPLIES. MUTHONI IS AMONG OTHER NOTABLE WOMEN LEADERS WHO SACRIFICED THEMSELVES FOR FREEDOM. SHE VOWED NOT TO CUT HER DREADLOCKS UNTIL KENYA RECEIVED "UHURU" - FREEDOM. SHE DID NOT CUT HER HAIR UNTIL 2022.



MZUNGU AKWENDE
ULAYA MWAFRIKA
APATE UHURU*



THIS IS OUR LAND THE
SPIRIT OF OUR ANCESTORS
IS OUR STRENGTH!

AAARGH
GOOD HEAVENS!



*THE WHITE MAN TO LEAVE FOR EUROPE, FOR THE AFRICANS TO GAIN THEIR FREEDOM (SWAHILI)

ON FEBRUARY 28, 1992, MOTHERS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, AGED BETWEEN 60 AND 80 YEARS, PRESENTED A LIST OF 52 POLITICAL PRISONERS TO KENYA'S ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THEIR RELEASE. THEY THEN PROCEEDED TO UHURU PARK TO PROTEST AND START A HUNGER STRIKE. THE MOTHERS WERE SUPPORTED AND MOBILISED BY ACTIVISTS AND FEMINISTS WANGARI MAATHAI AND NJERI KABEBERI. WANGARI SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF GOVERNMENT FOR THIS REASON, AS SHE WAS SEEN AS MORE VOCAL.

OFFICER HAVE YOU RECEIVED HIS CONFESSION YET?!

SIR, HE HAS REFUSED TO EAT AND SAYS HE IS INNOCENT! HIS MOTHER AND OTHER WOMEN HAVE STARTED A HUNGER STRIKE AT UHURU PARK.

POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE BEING DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL IN THE PROVINCIAL HEADQUARTERS BUILDING, THE INFAMOUS NYAYO HOUSE. THE PRESIDENT HAS CREATED TORTURE CHAMBERS TO FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE CLAMOUR FOR MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY. OPPONENTS OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS GOVERNMENT ASSEMBLED AT UHURU PARK TO CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO WERE BEING SUBJECTED TO VIOLENCE AND TORTURE BY THE STATE.

KENYA SHALL ONE DAY BE FREE OF MOI'S RULE! THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY CONTINUES!



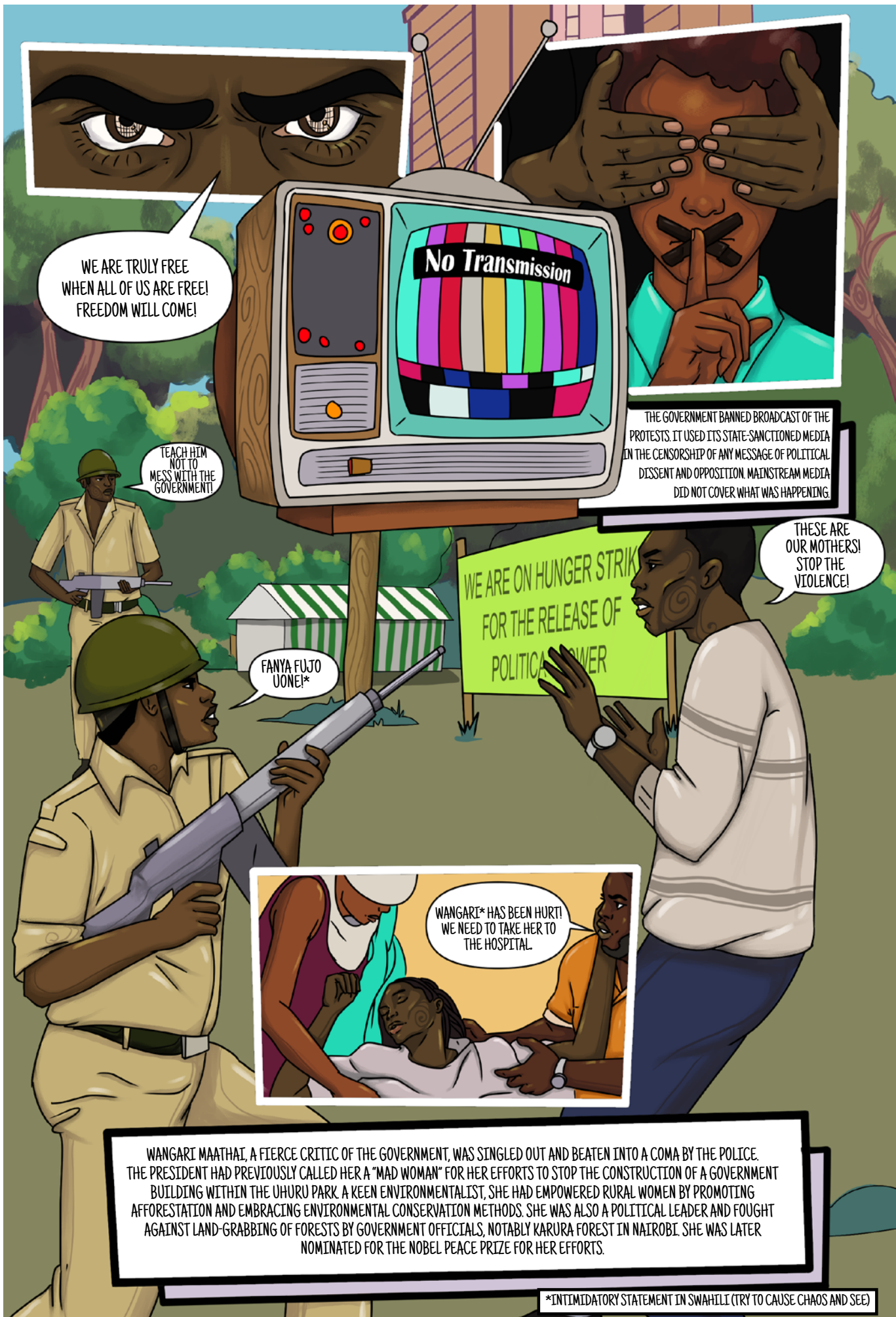
NYAYO ≠

WANGARI MATHAAI, FROM THE GREENBELT MOVEMENT, AND OTHER ACTIVISTS JOINED THE OTHER WOMEN AS THEY CAMPED IN THE PARK DAY AND NIGHT.



UHURU PARK HAS BEEN A RALLYING POINT FOR REFORMS SINCE THE 90'S. THE PARK'S NAME IS SYMBOLICALLY LINKED TO THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE, WHICH FREEDOM FIGHTERS LIKE MUTHONI WA KIRIMA WERE INVOLVED IN.





WE ARE TRULY FREE
WHEN ALL OF US ARE FREE!
FREEDOM WILL COME!

TEACH HIM
NOT TO
MESS WITH THE
GOVERNMENT!

FANYA FUJO
UONEI*

THESE ARE
OUR MOTHERS!
STOP THE
VIOLENCE!

WE ARE ON HUNGER STRIK
FOR THE RELEASE OF
POLITICAL POWER

WANGARI* HAS BEEN HURT!
WE NEED TO TAKE HER TO
THE HOSPITAL.

WANGARI MAATHAI, A FIERCE CRITIC OF THE GOVERNMENT, WAS SINGLED OUT AND BEATEN INTO A COMA BY THE POLICE. THE PRESIDENT HAD PREVIOUSLY CALLED HER A "MAD WOMAN" FOR HER EFFORTS TO STOP THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GOVERNMENT BUILDING WITHIN THE UHURU PARK. A KEEN ENVIRONMENTALIST, SHE HAD EMPOWERED RURAL WOMEN BY PROMOTING AFFORESTATION AND EMBRACING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION METHODS. SHE WAS ALSO A POLITICAL LEADER AND FOUGHT AGAINST LAND-GRABBING OF FORESTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, NOTABLY KARURA FOREST IN NAIROBI. SHE WAS LATER NOMINATED FOR THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR HER EFFORTS.

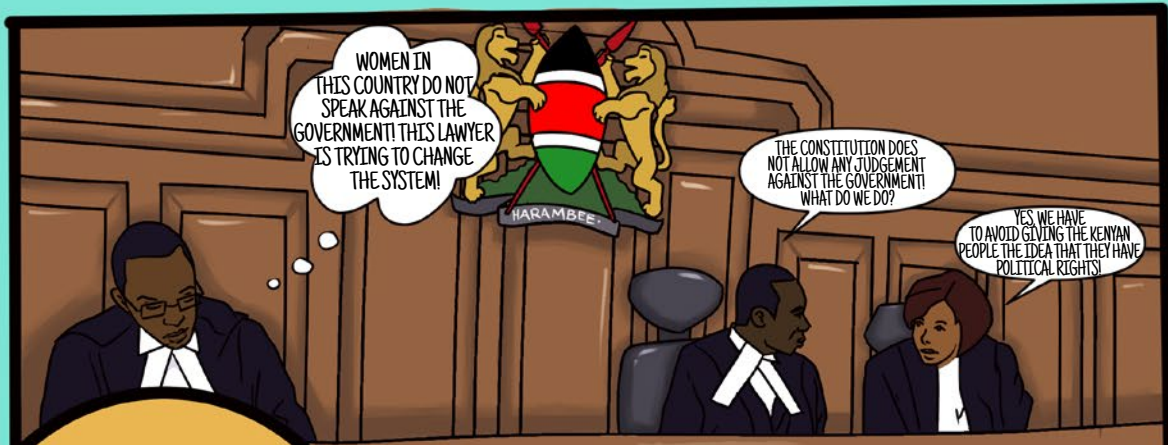
*INTIMIDATORY STATEMENT IN SWAHILI (TRY TO CAUSE CHAOS AND SEE)

WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT IS THIS THAT BEATS UP WOMEN?
KILL US THEN! WE SHALL NOT MOVE UNTIL OUR SONS ARE SET FREE!
WE SHALL DIE WITH OUR CHILDREN!



UNBELIEVEABLE!
THESE WOMEN ARE BRAVE! THEY HAVE
SHOWN THE POWER OF WOMEN IN THE FIGHT
FOR DEMOCRACY! LET ME SEE WHETHER THEY
WILL GET MORE SUPPORT FROM KENYANS AND
THE COURT. I SHALL PREPARE TO
DEFEND THEM AND WIN THE CASE!

ON MARCH 3, 1992, THE MOTHERS STRIPPED NAKED. THE KENYAN POLICE COULD NOT BRUTALISE THEM AS IN KENYAN CULTURE, IT WAS CONSIDERED A CURSE TO BE PRESENT WHEN AN ELDER WOMAN REMOVED HER CLOTHING IN PUBLIC. FINALLY, MEDIA COULD NO LONGER SHUN THEM. FOR 11 MONTHS, THEY FOUGHT THIS FIGHT. LEADING POLITICAL ACTIVISTS, INCLUDING LAWYER MARTHA KARUA, TOOK THEIR FIGHT TO THE COURT.



WOMEN IN THIS COUNTRY DO NOT SPEAK AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT! THIS LAWYER IS TRYING TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM!

THE CONSTITUTION DOES NOT ALLOW ANY JUDGEMENT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT! WHAT DO WE DO?

YES WE HAVE TO AVOID GIVING THE KENYAN PEOPLE THE IDEA THAT THEY HAVE POLITICAL RIGHTS!

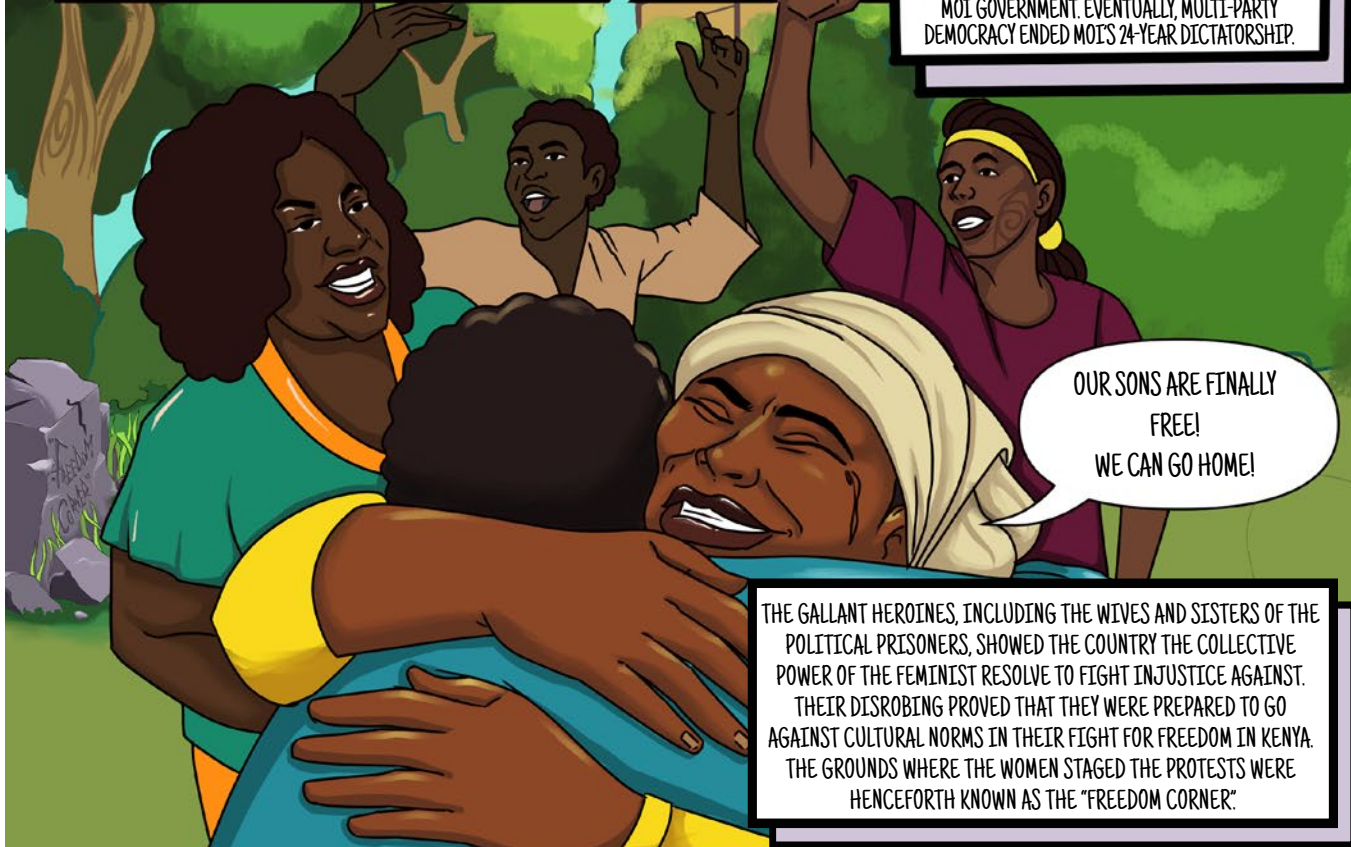


RELEASE ALL THE PRISONERS! IT IS AGAINST THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL TO HOLD KENYANS WITHOUT A CASE, AND TO SUBJECT THEM TO UNIMAGINABLE TORTURE!

MARTHA KARUA WAS THE ONLY LAWYER WILLING TO GO TO COURT FOR THE CASE OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS. EVENTUALLY, ALL PRISONERS WERE RELEASED IN JANUARY 1993 AFTER A COURT RULING.



AFTER 11 MONTHS OF DEFIANCE AND RESISTANCE, THE MOTHERS OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS SECURED THE FREEDOM OF THEIR SONS. THE VIOLENCE THAT THE MOTHERS ENDURED SPARKED RIOTS AND PROTESTS, AS WELL AS CONDEMNATION FROM THE UNITED STATES AND GERMANY, WHO DIRECTED CRITICISM TO THE MOI GOVERNMENT. EVENTUALLY, MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY ENDED MOI'S 24-YEAR DICTATORSHIP.



OUR SONS ARE FINALLY FREE! WE CAN GO HOME!

THE GALLANT HEROINES, INCLUDING THE WIVES AND SISTERS OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS, SHOWED THE COUNTRY THE COLLECTIVE POWER OF THE FEMINIST RESOLVE TO FIGHT INJUSTICE AGAINST. THEIR DISROBING PROVED THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO GO AGAINST CULTURAL NORMS IN THEIR FIGHT FOR FREEDOM IN KENYA. THE GROUNDS WHERE THE WOMEN STAGED THE PROTESTS WERE HENCEFORTH KNOWN AS THE "FREEDOM CORNER."

PRESENT DAY NAIROBI. PUBLIC TRANSPORT INCLUDES BUSES AND VANS CALLED "MATATUS." GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN MATATUS IS RAMPANT AND INCIDENTS OF GROPPING, VERBAL ABUSE, PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE OCCUR FREQUENTLY.

BEBA, BEBA
TAO MMOJA, BEBA
MREMBOI*

HOPE THE MATATU
WON'T TAKE TOO LONG TO
FILL UP TODAY. I DON'T WANT
TO BE LATE TO WORK AGAIN!
WAIT, IS THAT WOMAN
CRYING?

YOU'RE LOOKING
SEXY, BABY!

CONDUCTOR!
WHY DID YOU TOUCH ME?
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SHAME?
YOU ALWAYS DO THIS TO
WOMEN WHEN THEY ENTER
THE MATATU!

WOMEN IN MATATUS FACE
UNWANTED ADVANCES,
CATCALLS, AND INDECENT
PROPOSALS. SOCIETY IS
GENERALLY UNCONCERNED
AND NORMALISES THE
SEXUAL HARASSMENT.
THIS WAS HIGHLIGHTED IN
TWO CASES WHERE ONE
WOMAN WAS STRIPPED
NAKED AND ANOTHER
RAPED IN MATATUS.
DESPITE PUBLIC UPROAR,
SEXUAL HARASSMENT
STILL PERSISTS.

WHY IS SHE
COMPLAINING? SHE IS
DRESSED INDECENTLY.
SHE MUST HAVE WANTED
IT! SHE ASKED FOR IT!

BUT WHY ARE
OUR PEOPLE LIKE THIS?
JUST LET ME BE!

HAI HAI HAI!

MSCHEEW!
THESE YOUNG GIRLS
CAN'T DRESS WELL!

THE ACTIONS OF THE CONDUCTOR AND THE JUDGEMENT OF THE FELLOW COMMUTERS REFLECT THE SOCIETAL INERTIA TO CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR WOMEN IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT. WOMEN FEEL UNSAFE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND HAVE TO INFORM FRIENDS OR FAMILY OF THEIR ROUTES AND ITINERARIES TO ENSURE THEIR SAFE ARRIVAL. THE PRESSURE TO IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE FOR WOMEN HAS LED TO INITIATIVES SUCH AS GENDERED TAXI HAILING SERVICES, WHICH HAVE WOMEN DRIVERS. HOWEVER, THESE ARE EXPENSIVE. THE CASE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR WOMEN REMAINS AN ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED IN A COUNTRY WHERE MOST PEOPLE RELY ON IT FOR MOBILITY.

*CONDUCTOR CALLING OUT FARES IN SWAHILI



GOOD MORNING NAIROBI!
WELCOME TO THE BREAKFAST NEWS FROM NAIROBI FM!
BREAKING NEWS!
A YOUNG GIRL WAS FOUND DEAD OUTSIDE THE CITY CAMPUS. THE POLICE ARE LINKING THE MURDER AND THE RISE OF FEMICIDE CASES IN NAIROBI TO...

2019 WAS MARKED BY AN INCREASE IN FEMICIDE CASES WITH 150 REPORTED DEATHS. MEDIA ATTENTION TO THESE CASES DID NOT RESULT IN SUBSTANTIVE ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC..

YOUNG WOMEN INSPIRED BY THE GLOBAL FEMINIST #METOO MOVEMENT REALISED THEIR ROLE IN STANDING UP AGAINST THE RISING CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.



THIS INJUSTICE AGAINST WOMEN CAN'T GO ON! I MUST DO SOMETHING TO STOP THIS!



A NEW GENERATION OF FEMINISTS MOBILISED ON SOCIAL MEDIA – PLATFORMS THEIR MOTHERS NEVER HAD. THEY DOCUMENTED AND SHARED THE ABUSES OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AND THROUGH CAMPAIGNS LIKE #MYDRESSMYCHOICE, THEY FOUGHT BACK SOCIETY.



LIKE THEIR MOTHERS THREE DECADES AGO, THESE BOLD FEMINISTS ASSEMBLED AT FREEDOM CORNER. FACING BRUTAL POLICE OPPOSITION, THEY STOOD THEIR GROUND FEARLESS, FIGHTING FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR SISTERS, AND DAUGHTERS.

WOMEN'S LIVES MATTER!

1 in 3 OF US WILL BE VIOLATED IN OUR LIFETIME

OUR LIVES MATTER! WE ARE YOUR DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, MOTHERS! PROTECT US!



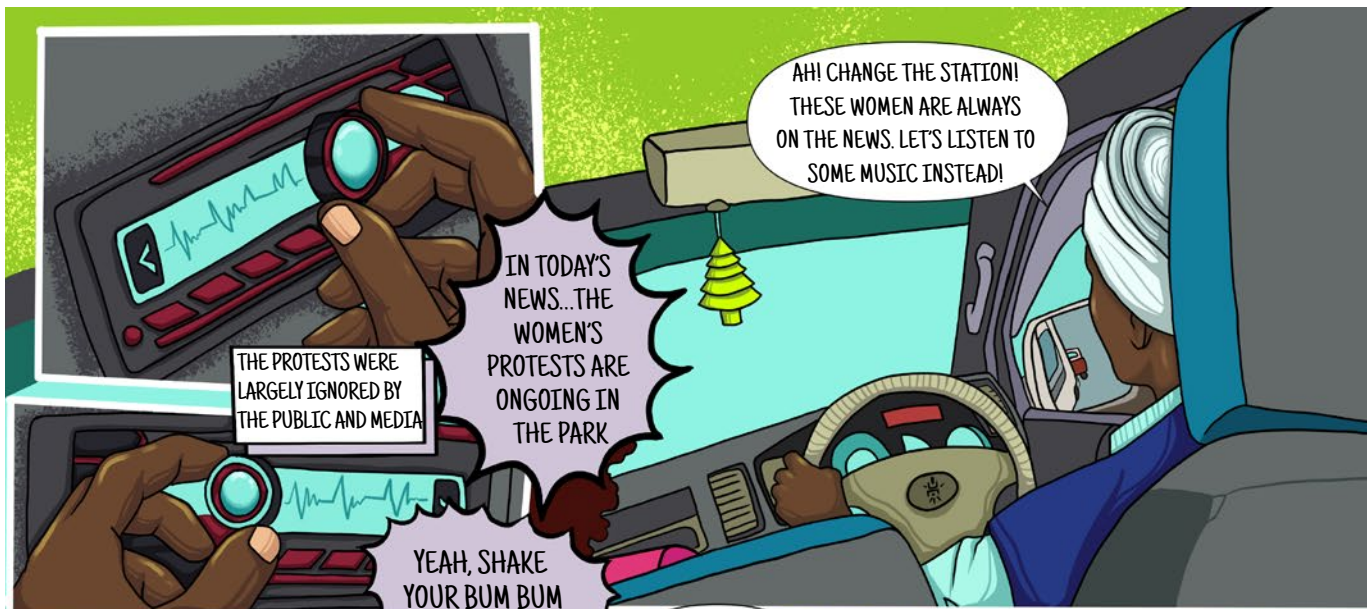
WHY ARE THESE WOMEN SO LOUD? THEY SHOULD JUST KEEP QUIET!

NO! IT'S THEIR RIGHT!

UNLIKE THEIR MOTHERS, THEY COULD NOT STRIP, BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE SEXUALISED, SHAMED, AND BEATEN BY POLICE. BUT THEY WERE LOUD, ANGRY, AND RELENTLESS IN SAYING THE NAMES OF WOMEN LOST TO VIOLENT MEN. THEY WERE CALLING FOR A #TOTALSHUTDOWNKE. THE USE OF THE HASHTAGS AND THEIR TRACTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA SHOWS HOW MUCH THE NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG FEMINISTS UTILIZED THE CURRENT WEAPONS OF RESISTANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE.

WE SHALL NOT REMAIN QUIET WHEN YOU KEEP KILLING US! YOU ARE OUR BROTHERS, HUSBANDS, AND SONS, YET YOU DO NOT SPEAK OUT AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN OUR SOCIETY!

THEIR CONTINUED PROTESTS CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF THE NAIROBI WOMEN REPRESENTATIVE, ESTHER PASSARIS, WHO JOINED THE DEMONSTRATIONS. THE PROTESTERS CALLED FOR A RENEWED APPROACH TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS AND A STOP TO FEMCIDES. THIS CAUSED THE GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH A #HEFORSHE CAMPAIGN, WHICH WAS CONSIDERED AS A HALF-HEARTED EFFORT AT DIVERTING THE PROTEST'S OBJECTIVES.



AH! CHANGE THE STATION!
THESE WOMEN ARE ALWAYS
ON THE NEWS. LET'S LISTEN TO
SOME MUSIC INSTEAD!

IN TODAY'S
NEWS...THE
WOMEN'S
PROTESTS ARE
ONGOING IN
THE PARK

THE PROTESTS WERE
LARGELY IGNORED BY
THE PUBLIC AND MEDIA

YEAH, SHAKE
YOUR BUM BUM

IN FEBRUARY 2020, WOMEN ASSEMBLED AGAIN ON
FREEDOM CORNER WITH A LIST OF 139 WOMEN
AND A BABY WHO HAD BEEN KILLED. THEY
DEMANDED GOVERNMENT RESPONSE. THE
PROTESTS LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE
"FEMINISTS IN KENYA" MOVEMENT AND
"USIKIMYE" (DO NOT BE QUIET) - A SEXUAL
AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESCUE
INITIATIVE THAT PROVIDES SAFE HOUSES
FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.



STOP KILLING US!
PROSECUTE ALL
THOSE WHO KILL
WOMEN!

WILL I EVER BE
SAFE IN A MATATU?

WOMEN DESERVE TO
HAVE THEIR FREEDOMS
PROTECTED.

I WISH SOCIETY
WOULD JUST GIVE
US OUR HUMAN RIGHTS
AS WOMEN!

WHAT KIND OF
MUSIC IS THAT?!
IT IS DEGRADING
TO WOMEN!

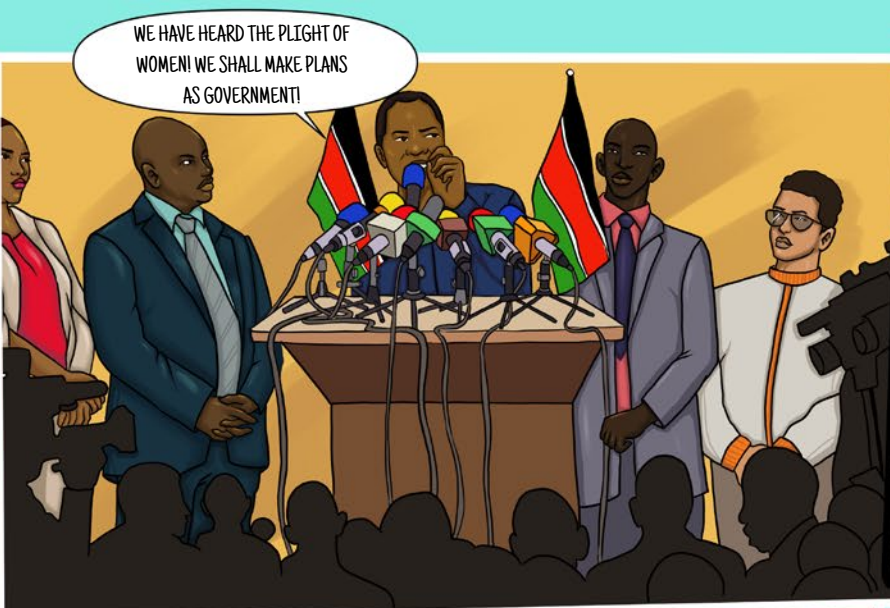
OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS
LEADERS IS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE
DEATHS OF THESE 150 WOMEN
WERE NOT IN VAIN!



PROTEST
AT
FREEDOM
CORNER

AS WOMEN REPRESENTATIVE,
I WILL NOT SIT BACK AND WATCH
THEM PROTESTING.
I AM COMING TO JOIN!

THIRTY YEARS LATER, THE PARK REMAINED THE
PLACE WHERE KENYAN WOMEN GATHERED TO
MAKE THEIR LAST STAND. THE INCLUSION OF
POLITICAL VOICES SERVED TO SHOW THE
STRIDES MADE IN FEMINISM.

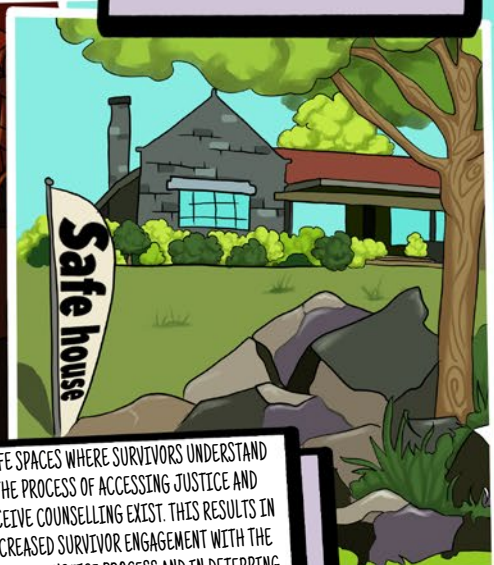


WE HAVE HEARD THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN WE SHALL MAKE PLANS AS GOVERNMENT!

DESPITE THE PROMULGATION OF A NEW CONSTITUTION THAT PROVIDES THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN IN KENYA, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IS STILL A LONG WAY WITH SOME OF THE PROVISIONS.



THE VIGIL HELD TO COMMEMORATE THE FEMICIDE VICTIMS WAS A REITERATION OF THE CALL FOR THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM ALL FORMS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.



SAFE SPACES WHERE SURVIVORS UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS OF ACCESSING JUSTICE AND RECEIVE COUNSELLING EXIST. THIS RESULTS IN INCREASED SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS AND IN DETERRING PERPETRATORS AND ENDING IMPUNITY AND CYCLES OF VIOLENCE.




THE PARK IS NOW FENCED UP. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY IT WILL EVER BE THE GROUNDS WHERE FEMINISTS ASSEMBLE. BUT OUR BODIES WERE ALWAYS THE BATTLEGROUND AND THE CASUALTY, AND WITH THAT, WE MAKE A LAST STAND.







 **HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG**
FEMINISM AND
GENDER DEMOCRACY
Global Unit

