

حوائین زین اش مسلم قوانین  
Women Living Under Muslim Laws  
النساء فی ظل قوانین المسلمین  
Femmes sous lois musulmanes

International Solidarity Network

## WLUML Annual Report 2018



The Girls at Dhabas movement was established to encourage women to repossess accessibility of streets and public spaces

**Making Public Space Safe for Women Is a Prerequisite for Gender Equality**

## **This Year at Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)**

**The 2018 WLUML program:** Based on discussions and conclusions of the 2017 Montreal meeting and subsequent discussions with various active networkers, the following area of activities were identified as the focus for 2018 activities. Simultaneously, there were discussions with various past and present networkers and council members on the various ways that the vision that was put forward in the meeting of June 2017 can be operationalized.

### **A: Revisiting our mission and focus based on the outcome of the Montreal Meeting (June 2017) and subsequent exchanges with active networkers**

The activities in 2018 were guided by the suggestions and vision of the Participants in the WLUML Montreal meeting which took place at The Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism (CHRLP), Faculty of Law, McGill University, June 2017, and by subsequent interactions with the most active networkers on the listserve as well as input from past and present active networkers via email and phone conversations. Networkers and participants agreed that the WLUML vision is more relevant today than ever and that WLUML must continue its mission to build and strengthen the transnational women's movement. It was agreed that building stronger ties between women living in diverse Muslim contexts -- and especially with women of minority communities in the west was of outmost importance. Along these lines, it was suggested that WLUML must also focus more directly on women of religious minorities living in Muslim contexts, given that they are often doubly oppressed, both as women in the wider society, and within their communities, where their demands for change are often suppressed on the pretext that raising them would undermine community cohesion and strength, creating added vulnerability to oppression from the wider society. Some participants referred to earlier extensive discussion concerning implementing a 'research for action' program looking at religious minority women in Muslim contexts, arguing that WLUML needs to draw from past experiences working in Muslim Indian and Sri Lankan contexts, and update its approach to address the situation of these women, including Baha'i women in Iran, Yazidis in Iraq, Coptics in Egypt, Armenians in various Muslim contexts, and women of other religious minorities in Muslim contexts. It was emphasized that WLUML has the legitimacy and expertise to look into these contextual issues, and to provide a platform for women to express their demands for gender equality, human rights, and security from within their communities, and to strengthen their solidarity with women activists in the global community.

However, both during the Montreal meeting and during subsequent interactions, participants agreed that it was important to reflect on current international realities to plan an effective framework of activities. On one hand we are observing a near global political swing to the right and to an iteration of populism that is attacking citizen's basic human rights, at the same time as a new wave of religious conservatism and fundamentalism includes attacks on women's human rights. On the other hand, there is far less funding for the promotion of women's human rights, and the funding opportunities that do exist are increasingly politicized and specific, demanding that WLUMML and other NGOs carry out funders' priorities rather than the needs identified by networkers concerning gender equality struggles, as stated in WLUMML mandate and policies. The networkers agreed that we should continue our/WLUMML vision of independence and if that contradicts the funders' visions, WLUMML should focus on its priorities and attempt to find alternatives ways to overcome the lack of funding, such as crowdsourcing and an increased focus on building a committed volunteer community of engaged feminist activists – which indeed is something WLUMML has always been committed to.

However, this requires that WLUMML re-examine its structure and administration mechanisms. The networkers have suggested that the current large, but unfortunately over-extended, board of directors, and council members which has little time to devote to WLUMML, might not be the most effective way of promoting activism. It was suggested that the next board meeting include a restructuring of the board to incorporate a larger advisory committee with women advocates from different areas of expertise, and a smaller board and council members comprised of qualified and committed networkers who have more time to devote to and oversee the running of WLUMML and to facilitate networking. Given the transnational nature of WLUMML, it was suggested that a smaller, hands-on board would likely be more effective given the logistics of organizing over multiple time zones. And, given that the lack of funding limits the engagement of paid admin, the members of this small board would have to be more engaged in the running of the organization for the time being. Based on these criteria and conditions, during the 2017 meeting WLUMML networkers spent considerable time examining the various possibilities and criteria for the new board and council members. One interesting observation, for those of us who were more familiar with the history of WLUMML, was that the suggested structural model was very similar to the model that WLUMML adopted in its first two decades of existence. This observation made it clear that WLUMML urgently needs to systematically document its institutional history and memory. It was suggested by Fatou Sow that we pursue this with Marieme Helle-Lucus, the main funder of the network, who has expressed interest and intention to write a WLUMML history.

During 2018, the active board and council members, and active networkers have been working to make the appropriate structural changes and will present their findings at the 2018 AGM ( though due to the circumstances and extended discussion of various aspects of re-structural procedures, exceptionally the AGM was postponed to 2019.



## **B - Making public space safe for women**

One of the major outcomes of the consultation and dialogues with the younger networkers was the urgency of addressing women's increasing lack of safety in the streets and public spaces. WLUML was urged to launch an investigative project on this often ignored issue. WLUML learned that younger groups of both men and women have devised strategies to combat increasingly malicious harassment aimed at limiting women's access to and presence in public spaces. Indeed, some young networkers pointed out that having written laws on gender equality without safe ways and means of operationalizing them means it is impossible to promote gender equality and full citizenship for women, since women's ability to have a secure presence in public spaces is prerequisite to their ability to claim their equality as persons and as citizens. Based on this discussion and further concerns around public safety from networkers in different Muslim contexts, WLUML developed a program for documenting initiatives and debates around the politics of women's public presence, which can be shared with women in different contexts, and also used as a platform for inter-generational dialogues among feminists. WLUML has prepared a 'mother-project' plan that can be adapted by feminist groups in various contexts and to launch their own research and initiatives around types of harassment intended to undermine women's presence public spaces. The idea of a mother-project document was based on the successful model



that WLUML developed for its Women and Family Law Project (1991-2005), which activists in various contexts adjusted to fit the priorities of their own situations to advocate for reform of family laws in more than 28 countries (see the international handbook: Knowing Our Rights).



### **The project:**

Access to public spaces as a matter of course for women and men is a significant reflection of gender practices and the degree of gender equality in a given society. The word ‘space’ is used here as a social construct, including but not limited to place, arena, time, ability to freely think and act, to participate in and watch sports and games in groups and alone in public arenas, to use public transport, to partake in elections both as voters and as candidates, to organize and participate in peaceful demonstrations, to drive or bicycle or use any form of transport on public roads, to be represented in public media, cinema and any virtual arena. Since the presence of women in public spaces is limited in most societies to varying degrees, women’s public presence has both symbolic and actual value. This presence is indicative of levels of flexibility, openness, tolerance, and democratization, particularly in Muslim contexts, where public spaces have been assumed to be primarily male spaces.

Women have learned through centuries of struggle that public visibility is the first step in establishing their rights as citizens. Thus, since the early twentieth century, women have contested their limited access to public spaces and have been taking steps to claim their rightful place in public arenas. In many post-colonial Muslim and non-Muslim contexts, constituencies of women politicized in the course of anti-colonial movements demanded access to public space, pushed for refashioning women’s roles, for their incorporation in public life, and for the

acknowledgment of women as full citizens. To varying degrees, the newly established states supported and promoted these demands based on the assumption that modernity required women's presence in public life.<sup>1</sup> Arguments to frame these new roles for women in line with 'authentic' traditional or religious dictates were developed by both state and public intellectuals, which had important implications with regards to advancing women's demands and challenging the opposition to the expansion of women's role in society. Moreover, state support provided not only resources but, more importantly, ideological legitimacy for women's new roles.

However, since the 1970s and in particular following the 1979 Iranian revolution and the establishment of Iran's Islamist regime and 'sharia law', questions of women's rights, dress code, and women's public roles have become highly politicized in many Muslim societies by both liberal forces and by political Islamists who view imposed hijab and gender segregation as a superior way of life. This has since invigorated political Islamists, both within and outside of state structures, to promote a restrictive and marginal understanding of Islam, based on literal readings of religious texts rather than on the diversity of lived Islam. These are draped in a rhetoric of cultural authenticity and anti-Westernism, and include diverse pressure tactics and strategies to limit the public role of women.<sup>2</sup>

Political Islamists, having deemed women's bodies and bodily movements a source of chaos which arouses male sexual desire and creates social disorder, claim to promote an ideal segregated society based on an imagined 'glorious early Islamic community' where a woman's role is limited primarily to motherhood and care-giving; ideally, excluding any form of contact with men outside the private sphere or their immediate kin. Given their commitment to gender segregation, they may grudgingly accept that women become teachers, nurses, and doctors in order to provide services to female students and patients. And, despite differences between many schools of political Islam, their views of women's rights and roles are very similar and gender segregation central to their ideology. From Algeria to Egypt, Nigeria, Iran, and even Indonesia and Malaysia where historically women enjoyed significant freedom of movement and access to the public sphere, conservatives and political Islamists<sup>3</sup> claim that 'authenticity' and religious dictates require the exclusion of women from public space and the imposition of restrictive dress codes and gender roles, as some of WLUML earlier research and publications indicates.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> While many Muslim majority states promoted modernity, none promoted democratic development or an opening of the public sphere to citizen debates concerning the state. Thus public/civil society politics were conducted through social institutions, public spaces and religious practices normally considered non-political.

<sup>2</sup> For a brief overview and discussion of political Islamism (also referred to as fundamentalism) see Akbarzadeh (2012) and Volpi (2011).

<sup>3</sup> Political Islamist refers to those who use Islam and religion to achieve their political goals and to gain access to state and formal power.

<sup>4</sup> Hoodfar, 2015, 2012; Wee 2012; Freedman 1997.

Such ideological environments have placed sexual politics at the center of the debate on women's rights in everyday matters. This ideological opposition concerning myriad aspects of daily life has considerable implications for women's presence in public spaces. However, in the absence of democracy in most Muslim majority contexts, collective organized activism and resistance to formalized and informal exclusionary practices against women can be dangerous for activists (and often their families) and sympathizers. To minimize the risks of public political engagement, women have devised subtle initiatives or strategies in order to engender public examination of cultural norms, religious understandings of women's rights, roles, and dignity, and to protect and promote gender equality and women's rights as citizens. Gender equality advocates are well aware that women's rights discourses can never be autonomous of their contexts, and that success depends on presenting arguments, actions, and demands in ways that resonate with and are tied to those of the larger public, if not the state. Women's adoption of new and subtle strategies includes politicization of spaces hitherto considered outside politics. Public spaces such as parks, streets, and public transit loom large among these newly politicized arenas, since almost all women, from all walks of life, move through these spaces daily and thus wittingly or unwittingly participate in this politics of public presence.

The politics of presence have rendered public spaces venues or channels for redefining and reclaiming women's rights and spheres of influence. They allow women from various social and religious backgrounds to participate by simply gathering, or walking alone or in groups, since such informal activities are not subject to any chain of command and accommodate any ideological or religious position.

The power of these informal movements stems in large part from their fluidity and the absence of any public speaking component; thus large segments of women, who may not have much appetite for "politics", who may have never engaged with activist leaders, or considered themselves leaders, can participate and contribute without having to conform to any formally defined institutional or ideological perspective.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, simply by their actions they are transforming and expanding the definition of women's spheres otherwise delimited by conservative and patriarchal tendencies and particularly male-centered interpretations of Islam.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Although some scholars refer to these informal social movements as leaderless, we can equally conceptualize them as "leaderful" and transformative, as well as democratic. For a discussion of different forms of leadership and social transformation, as well as the concept of "leaderful", see Bunch (2002) and Batliwala (2010).

<sup>6</sup> The full project was prepared during January and February by Homa Hoodfar in consultation with various WLUML networkers. It was submitted to the SPP Applied Policy Project at CEU, where several young WLUML networkers are studying communication and journalism, in April 2018. Several other groups of young activists in Turkey, Iran, and Egypt are also interested in adapting the project for their contexts. The idea is to produce a series of short videos and articles for workshops and feminist discussion groups.



**‘Girls at  
Pakistan**

**Dhabas’,**

A group of networkers involved in Central European University’s School of Public Policy (SPP) program (Ifra Asad from Pakistan, who has worked with WLUML in various capacities since 2015; Zainab Shumail who worked at the Lahore office of Shirkat Gah Women’s Resource Center, and Mackenzie Nelson, a dynamic young journalist who has joined the team) was interested in working on the public space project and invited WLUML to submit a funding proposal to the CEU SPP.<sup>7</sup> The focus of their particular interest -- “Girls at Dhabas” (<https://www.buzzfeed.com/imaansheikh/girls-at-dhabas> and <https://www.facebook.com/girlsatdhabas/>) looked at young women attempting to claim public spaces (dhabas are roadside restaurants on the Indian subcontinent primarily/traditionally frequented by men) by making them safer for women, and trying to establish their right to be present in public spaces. By simply sitting in cafes and parks, and riding their bicycles and motorcycles, they revealed the exclusionary practices that work to keep women out of public spaces and to limit their mobility. They have thus politicized public spaces normally considered to be male, and definitely not normally considered part of the political sphere. Using social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, they have mobilized many young women to act and speak out on the issue of women’s rights to public space in all its dimensions. The ‘Girls At Dhabas’ curators note that freedom of mobility is a main goal of feminism and their initiative

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<sup>7</sup> The School of Public Policy is a multidisciplinary institution for the theoretical and practical study of global public policy issues. SPP aims to create an educational experience that involves the acquisition of skills and knowledge and the cultivation of a mindset that supports entrepreneurship, innovation, cultural awareness, and commitment to the public good.



takes a step towards actualizing theory by moving towards that goal. The Girls of Dhabas go, in groups of 2 or more; girls, at Dhabas' to spaces normally assumed to be male and sit, drink coffee, have a picnic, and take pictures of themselves to post on social media. They are also promoting the use of bicycles and motorcycles by women, hoping to enable women and girls in Pakistan and elsewhere to move more freely. Many girls, from far corners of Pakistan and other parts of South Asia have followed their example, and the images and debates they share have spread widely, sparking public engagement and discussion.<sup>8</sup> The team will explore:

- ❖ The origins of 'Girls at Dhabas' and its evolution from a hash tag to the solidarity movement it has become
- ❖ The barriers that keep Pakistani women out of the public sphere
- ❖ How initiatives such as 'Girls at Dhabas' help women hold society accountable for the safety of public spaces
- ❖ Backlash faced by the 'Girls at Dhabas' movement from within the conventional/second wave feminist community in Pakistan and from Pakistani society in general, and its response
- ❖ The relevance of 'Girls at Dhabas' for other South Asian women's rights initiatives
- ❖ The achievements to date of 'Girls at Dhabas' and its long-term goals
- ❖ The significant attention attracted by the movement, and the debates it has engendered across South Asia from both supporters and critics



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<sup>8</sup> 'Girls at dahbas' has publicized the unspoken politics of public spaces, and is helping to establish the right of women to be present in these spaces as women, as individuals, and as citizens. The initiative is very similar to the Stealthy Freedom initiative of the now exiled Masih Alinejad site [My Stealthy Freedom](#), where Iranian women post pictures of themselves unveiled. Over a million photos have been posted on the site and have helped embolden other young women to remove their (compulsory) hijab in public spaces in busy Iranian city centres, presenting yet another challenge to the anti-women Iranian regime.

The WLUML project proposing to document, report on, and create a film about 'Girls at Dhabas' was defended by the research team and funding was granted. WLUML Board Member and anthropologist Homa Hoodfar, Ph. D., and Jeremy Braverman, CEU Media and Visual Education specialist, were appointed to supervise the project. The field research and interviews with the 'Girls at Dhabas', along with interviews with some of the older members of the Women's Action Forum (WAF) showing their perspective on the movement, was carried out in December 2018. The first viewing for the rough cut of the film is scheduled for April 2019 at CEU in Budapest and Homa Hoodfar in her role as advisor will be invited to this screening. The first phase of the project will be finalized in June 2019 after a second interview scheduled for May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 with Farida Shaheed. The film has a double purpose; firstly, to claim public spaces for women, and secondly to present the different strategies and phases of the women's movement, framing constructive dialogue between younger and older stages of the women's movement in Pakistan.





### **C - Women In Electoral Politics: Building a ‘harass-map’ documenting harassment of women candidates and MPs in Muslim contexts:**

WLUML committed to promoting gender equality in the public and private spheres. In the course of research and activism, it became clear that women’s representation in both local and national electoral politics are important factors in promoting gender equality and women’s human rights. Therefore, monitoring impediments to the promotion of women’s electoral participation has been a major concern of WLUML particularly since 2000. WLUML’s Gender Equality Program supports, promotes, and empowers women in formal and electoral politics. Many of its workshops, exchanges, and publications have focused on the promotion of female political leadership and of women in regional and national electoral politics. Over the years there have been many WLUML research projects and workshops in support of local initiatives and to foster informed interventions by advocates of women’s participation in local and national decision-making bodies. The results have been documented in several publications, including *Dossier 29: Human Rights & Gender Equality (2008)*; *Women’s Charters and Declarations: Building Another World (2014)*; and *Electoral Politics: making Quotas work for Women (2012)*.

With increases in both cyber, and other forms of attacks, including physical harm to female political candidates and their families, the new phase of this program is focused on documenting and monitoring obstacles and harassment faced by women candidates. The central goals are to raise awareness of this phenomenon, which often has a sexual connotation, and to develop strategies and suggest policies to support women candidates and counteract the increasing harassment they face.<sup>9</sup> While the phenomenon is almost global, it does strike a chord more deeply against women, given the strong honor code prevalent in Muslim contexts.

Background: Over the course of the ‘Women’s Empowerment and Leadership Development for Democratization (WELDD 2012-2015) program (a collaboration between Shirkat Gah Pakistan,

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<sup>9</sup> In 2017, our ‘Women and Politics’ research team members Homa Hoodfar and Mona Tajali represented WLUML at the ‘Resisting Women’s Political Leadership: Theories, Data, Solutions’ colloquium, sponsored by Rutgers University’s Women’s Studies Program (May 22-26). It brought together feminist scholars, activists, and female politicians to discuss obstacles to women entering electoral politics. The issue of harassment, particularly sexual and demeaning harassment directed at women politicians, was a major focus of the international conference.

the Institute for Women's Empowerment Hong Kong, and WLUML implemented in 12 countries with the overall objective of strengthening women's public leadership and political participation via leadership training workshops and other initiatives), it became clear that women running for public office face considerable harassment in many forms, including threats to their own and their families' physical security. Other belligerent attacks are mounted through social media, print media and traditional word-of-mouth in the form of rumours of immorality -- particularly of a sexual nature. Such harassment places women political leaders and their families under extreme emotional stress, and has a chilling effect on women's willingness to stand for election in many Muslim contexts. Since 2016, on the heels of the WELDD project, WLUML has turned its attention to addressing this significant impediment to the empowerment of women in the political sphere. In 2016, WLUML collected material on the variety of ways women candidates are harassed, initially focusing on the 2016 Iranian parliamentary election; then WLUML turned to the issues women candidates faced in the 2018 Iraqi national election which saw an unprecedented 2600 female candidates from all walks of life stand for parliamentary election. While The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) and UN Women focused on supporting women through various training and workshops for women candidates, WLUML monitored the major obstacle and various forms of harassments and impediments, both physical and social, faced by the women candidates.

Indeed, Iraqi women were subject to considerable hostility in both the 2018 and previous elections at both regional and national levels. WLUML monitored the experiences of women candidates in 2018, and the strategies they developed to address and manage physical and social harassment and security threats, and to mitigate their effects on themselves and their families. Along with monitoring social and print media, WLUML also had an intern who conducted a series of interviews with candidates, documenting their personal accounts of these types of challenges. We were also interested in monitoring regional variations in the experiences of female candidates, and a result was a short report of this project written for the online e-magazine *Jadaluyya* by Mona Tajlai and Sarah Farhan, "Women's Candidacy and Violence against Women in the Politics of Iraq", published in July 2018. We chose *Jadaliyya* in order to reach the widest possible interested audience.<sup>10</sup> The final draft of this project report is complete and is scheduled to be published next year (2019).

WLUML will also collect data on the harassment experiences of female candidates, and their strategies for dealing with them, during the 2019 local elections in Turkey. The intention is to build a 'political harass-map', in order to raise awareness and engender debate around this issue, which remains a taboo topic as far as public discourse, and to share the strategies female candidates

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/37780/Women%E2%80%99s-Candidacy-and-Violence-against-Women-in-Politics-in-Iraq>



have developed to counter harassment. In the final analysis, WLUML networkers hope to provide a tool that enables women's rights advocates to exert pressures on the institutions that oversee elections in hopes of provoking the creation of policies and laws that prevent or at least reduce such harassment.



#### **D: Participation CSW 62, March 2018:**

Given that the USA introduced a Muslim ban that precluded women from many Muslim contexts from obtaining visas to come to New York, it was clear that many WLUMML networkers would be unable to participate in CSW. For this reason, WLUMML did not organize any side event. However, board member Homa Hoodfar attended several sessions and met with some past and present networkers to discuss some of the issues relevant to, and current initiatives undertaken by, WLUMML.

#### **E: Interns and Volunteers**

WLUMML has always been interested in working with volunteers and interns committed to working to promote gender equality and human rights. Furthermore, since many WLUMML projects are designed to be conducted by committed advocates of gender equality and plural democracy, it considers hosting and training interns and volunteers as part of its mission. In 2018, other than a few short-term volunteers, we had three interns conducting research on various WLUMML projects and working with the publication committee.



#### **Ifra Assad**

Ifra has been involved with WLUMML during the WELDD project particularly during the 2015. Since then Ifra Asad has been an intern with WLUMML. She actively participated in the WLUMML Meeting in Montreal during June 2017 and its follow up with the research with the active networkers. During 2018 she also worked on the Women in Public Space Project with a team she put together to produce a film on 'Girls at Dhabas', she has also been managing WLUMML email communication and facilitating ongoing contact amongst networkers particularly the WLUMML Council

members.



#### **Setenay Mutlu Adisönmez**

Setenay applied to intern with WLUMML from Lund University in Sweden, where she completed her MA thesis entitled "The Societal Roles of Women's Organizations: Illustrations from Transforming Turkey". She has also worked with Amnesty International. She has since moved to the UK and works with WLUMML's research and publication committees, as well as on improving and updating the WLUMML website, which has been mostly dormant during 2018 for a host of technical and other reasons.

She is interested in conducting field-research to document the types of harassment experienced by women attending various public demonstrations in Turkey since 2015. She is also investigating strategies individual women and feminist organizations have adopted to combat harassment. In July and August 2018, she traveled to Istanbul to assess the feasibility of her proposed 'research for action', which intends to bring together various feminist and women's organizations to work to combat violence against women in public. Based on the findings of her preliminary research trip, she is revising her project and hopes to conduct more field research and plans to organize a workshop on the topic. She is also preparing to monitor women's experiences as supporters, voters and candidates in Turkey's upcoming 2019 local elections, in order to map the extent and types of harassment faced by women.

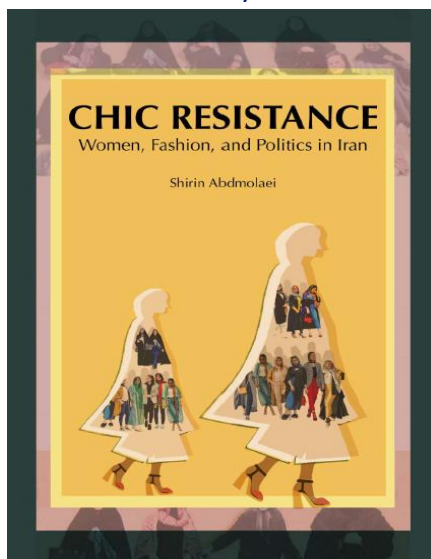
### **Sarah Majid Farhan**

Sarah is an American of Iraqi origin, born in Iraq and based in the USA, who reads and writes in Arabic and is very knowledgeable concerning social media. She applied to work as an intern with WLUML in February 2018. Her major interest is women and politics, particularly in Iraq. We invited her to join the 'harass-map' project, monitoring the experiences of women candidates for both local and national level elections. She monitored and interviewed women candidates regarding the issues that concerned them, and the impediments they identified to their campaign for election. She carried out a survey of social media networks and sites focusing on the election, and prepared a draft report that is in the process of being reviewed and finalized.

## F: Publication Committee:

Based on the suggestions made at the Montreal workshop in 2017, and on extensive consultation with networkers and feedback from the publication committee (currently Mona Tajali, Rashida Manjoo, Vrinda Narain, Rochelle Terman, Anissa Helie), we have committed to implement more regular publication of Dossiers, and make them more widely accessible. It was suggested that our publications focus primarily on WLUML projects and action research, and that we re-launch our 'Women's Movement' Series. The publication committee has proposed to focus on women and mobility, with emphasis on historical and recent debates and actions around women cycling on public roads in Muslim contexts, since it does seem to be the most restricted forms of transport for women and yet it is one of environmentally cleaner and more affordable means. The call for papers will be issued in 2019 under the title 'Riding To Freedom: Women And Cycling In Muslim Contexts'. The title was suggested by Anissa Helie and approved by publication committee members. This publication will dovetail with the WLUML *Women in Public Spaces* project.

Also, following our project/exhibit 'Dress Codes and Modes', we have compiled a book entitled *Chic Resistance: Women, Fashion, and Politics In Iran*. The book will be launched on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019, on International women's day.



A third publication is in the pipeline, "Building Bridges: Women's Movements and Transnational Activism in the Middle East and Asia" (1926-1995). This short book will provide an overview of the efforts to organize the transnational women's movement in the early part of the twentieth century. It is scheduled to be launched on international women's day in 2020.



A report has been tabled on the impediment and harassment of women in Iraqi election of May 2018. It will be published as soon as the revision is completed and the committee gives it final approval in 2019.

## **G: Media and Public Talks**

### **November 2018**

Homa Hoodfar was invited by Douglas College in Vancouver to give a public lecture on WLUML and *Women's Sport As Politics In Muslim Contexts*, and the politics of public participation. The college includes a large community of Iranian, South Asian, and Canadian aboriginal youth. The talk was part of a series that focused on the importance of organizing, in various arenas of social and public life, locally, nationally and internationally, and of advocating for inclusion, human rights, and gender equality. There were around 300 audience members at this talk.

### **H: 'Sisters' Trust in Human Rights' Project**

This project was initiated by several female human rights activists (mostly lawyers), who were forced to flee their home countries due to oppression and violence directed at them because of their human/citizen's rights advocacy work. WLUML has been participating in this project, helping to research threats to, and imprisonment of, women's human rights advocates, and looking at the formal and informal ways women's human rights networks can help support struggles of women's rights advocates around the world.