



AFRICAN
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
FUND



جمعية نساء بغداد
Baghdad Women Association

(Young brides are often deprived of their rights)

National Conference

Implemented by Baghdad Women Association - coinciding with the
World Day Against Trafficking in persons

Releasing the study findings of
(The Economic Cost of the Impact of Child Marriage)



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With the participation of (90) representatives of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities, civil society organizations and the media, and with coverage that included the presence of an actor from (9) central and northern Iraqi provinces and the provinces of the south

Releasing the study findings of (The Economic Cost of the Impact of Child Marriage)

That was on July 30, 2022 in Baghdad-Al-Oyun Complex, Taraji Hall - Within the project (She Leads for Ending Child marriage to Ensure a stronger and Inclusive Iraqi society) with the support of the African Women's Development Fund , the aforementioned study was released in the presence of a distinguished elite gathering of 90 people, including the senior agent - Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Dr. Alaa Al-Sakini and Dr. Dalia Farouk, Director of the Office of the Technical Agent - Minister of Environment Dr. Jassim Al-Falahi and General Ali Mohammed, Director of the Directorate of Protection of Domestic violence, Decision makers and influencers from all sectors concerned health, education, security and others such as the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior - Directorate of Protection against Domestic Violence and community police, ministry of justice, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Christian Endowment Office and other religions, relevant unions As the Association of Lawyers, the Union of Jurists, the Iraqi Workers' Union and civil society organizations and (20) media organizations, influential figures in women's policies participated in the conference, general managers, department directors, university deans, writers and authors from the capital Baghdad and from the provinces (Anbar, Najaf, Karbala, Basra, Nineveh, Dhi Qar, Muthanna, Diwaniyah, wasit).

The conference started by the project manager and Lawyer Rasha Khalid presenting her speech on behalf of the President of Baghdad Women Association, Engineer Liza Nissan Hido

She started her speech with one of Jobran Khalil Jobran's sayings (Great agony results in silence.) from his novel (The broken wings) ... The subject we are discussing is presented to the girls' who are suffering as a result of child marriage. This topic does not claim that we were the first to plow, there are numeral efforts devoted to addressing this phenomenon, but we will be the first to highlight the economic cost of child marriages with their significant social and legal consequences, such as the loss of legal rights, the difficulty of proving marriage or descent, as well as the negative effects on the reproductive health of girls during the biological growth period. Especially after the statistics revealed that 28% of marriages are child marriages... I conclude by saying (fear is not always a smart advisor), so let's be free and start strongly in diagnosing and discussing to eliminate this phenomenon.



This was followed by the speech of His Excellency the Senior Agent - Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Dr. Alaa Al-Sakini;



We congratulate the Baghdad Women Association for its high national conference and the humanitarian work it has provided since its founding to those groups benefiting from the ministry's services. Civil society organizations have an active role to play, especially in the crisis of conflict that swept some of our cities in 2014-2018, as well as in supporting state agencies when the CORONA pandemic spread throughout Iraq... The stability of societies and their sophistication can only be achieved by taking care of the family, and from this point of view, the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 considered the families to be the foundation of society... International conventions, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, also provide extremely essential standards for the issue of

marriage and the conditions for its conclusion. In addition to the two international covenants of 1966, which emphasize free and total consent to marriage. In turn, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) stated that a child's betrothal or marriage had no legal consequences. These notions were strengthened by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child marriage has become more prevalent in Iraq as a result of orphanhood, unemployment, and economic decline, and we must all work together to eradicate it.

Followed by the speech of His Excellency the Technical Agent - Minister of Environment Dr. Jassim Al-Falahi, the respected dr. Dalia Farouk Fares, his office manager presented the speech on his behalf;



I convey to you the greetings and apologies of His Excellency the Technical Agent for not attending to an emergency commitment and also convey his thanks and appreciation to the Baghdad Women Association for holding this very important conference. Everyone knows about the leadership roles that Iraqi women adopt in our societies whether they are at home as wives, mothers or at their workplaces as employees or management leaders. This all underscores the support of the country and society. Sustainable societal development has been greatly influenced by the conditions experienced by our beloved country, namely the decline in the number of learners, especially females, low family financial incomes and poverty, which are the main reasons for the high rates of child marriages. The prevalence of this phenomenon was observed in urban

areas while it was confined to the countryside only... So, we need a serious pause in coordination with state institutions and civil society... what we want is a safe future for girls to ensure their right to education and conscious choice of life partner to ensure access to a family that is psychologically and physically stable

It was followed by a speech by Major General Ali Mohamed Salem Al-Muharram

head of the Directorate for Protection against Domestic Violence, and highlighted the following: The phenomenon of domestic violence has become a clear challenge to all efforts to improve the situation of Iraqi women and their empowerment. The statistics monitored by the Directorate for the Protection of Families



and Children indicate a rise in the rates of violence in Iraqi families as from last year till this year's April it reached 6825 violence cases. violence undoubtedly has social, psychological, economic and health consequences for both women and society and is directly linked to girls' marriages and school dropouts.



Professor Ghazwan Aweed Al-Manhlawi, a statistician, presented the research's survey findings

which were based on 1,600 randomly selected participants from the provinces the study was conducted in (Baghdad, Anbar, Najaf, Karbala)



Rasha Khalid, the project manager and lawyer, presented the findings of 40 interviews



with influential individuals who have firsthand experience with the issues affecting women and girls. These individuals included judges, doctors, activists, social and psychological researchers, caregivers for the disabled, teachers in schools and universities, service providers, clerics, tribal elders, and underage girls.



Opening the debate- gathering recommendations and proposals for the study and project's development, the most notable of are:

1. Determining the role of clerics in the conclusion of marriage contracts and preventing them from conducting on minors or outside the court.
2. Speeding up the adoption of the Law on the Protection of Domestic Violence, which is still pending in the house of representative's lists.
3. Separating child marriage phenomenon solving, from the religious opinions and to focus on its harms.
4. Raising awareness of the dangers of child marriage in middle schools and high schools.
5. Reinstatement of the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs to adopt proposals and recommendations.
6. Preparing government surveys according to economic literature on calculating the costs of child marriage.
7. Include the economic cost of child marriage when preparing GBV budgeting.
8. Compulsory primary, middle and high school education, which reduces the size of the phenomenon.
9. Activating the role of the social worker in concerns pertaining to those approaching early marriage in order to explain the accurate picture of marriage so that there is realistic thinking about the coming life.
10. Activating poverty alleviation strategies, especially because it is one of the primary causes of the phenomenon's growth.
11. Form a coalition of tribal elders, priests, significant social figures, civil society groups, and appropriate ministries to begin a nationwide push to abolish underage marriage.
12. Activating international treaties concerning human rights in general and women in particular, as well as eradicating all types of gender discrimination

The conference concluded by honoring the active figures and contributors to the success of the study, are; (Ms. Hadham Hussein Ali, Director of Women's Welfare in Karbala Province) and Mr. Salah Al-Shawki, Director of Women's Welfare in Najaf, as well as (Lawyer Nadia Saad Tayeh) as the best employee in the project



