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Written statement* submitted by the Verein Sudwind Entwicklungspolitik, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Honour Killing in Iran's Kurdish Regions

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, research and report on honour killings, like research and report in many other social issues related to violence against women is categorised as part of a threat to the national security. Therefore, at the national level, reliable and accurate statistics are rare. However, women activists in Kurdistan have managed to do some work on this issue and for this reason, sample examples in this report come exclusively from the Kurdish areas.
Honour killing is not an act of violence by one man against a woman. It is a set of male-dominated system which demonstrates itself in forced marriages, early marriages, female virginity, female genital mutilation, acid attack, deprivation from education, all of which systematise social relations between men and women. The killing of a woman is related to the man's honour to sustain the system of male domination.

Men's social status is diminished among their tribe, village, and hometown and within the family if such code of honour is broken by a female family member. Often those who kill a family member admit pressures by the society they live in plays an important role.

Articles 301 and 302 of the new Islamic penal code have facilitated honour killings. Iran's penal code based on Ghisas (retribution) leaves the punishment to a family member who is either the culprit himself or a close family member. In case of a wife killing, the husband pays half of Diyeh (blood money) to the wife's family to seek their pardon.
The cases of 32 women documented by Kurdish women activists demonstrate the scope, the variety of brutality and violence against women in the context of honour killing.

1- Samira Dadgostar, 18 from Nasar Mar village was abducted by the village Sheikh for 2 days. After she was returned, her family killed her secretly. The villagers shaved the Sheikh's head, put women's dress on him (a sign of contempt which was repeated in Marivan later) and drove him on a donkey round the village. Samira's killers were released (2007).
2- Soraya, 34, mother of 3 children from Kani Dinar town in Marivan district was murdered by an axe by her husband as he suspected she has had an affair with another man. He paid half of blood money to Soraya's mother and was released from prison after 8 months.
3- Sheida's brothers were convinced by her husband she had an affair with a man in the city of Marivan. They murdered her on a street near park Melat. (2008, ParvinBakhtiari, silent murders).
4- Golbagh Houst, tailor from one of the villages in Marivan region was murdered by her brothers under the instigation of her husband (2009). One of the brothers, Mahdi is still in prison.
5- Shahin Nasrolahi , mother of a 20 year child from Dezeli village was thrown out of her home by her husband who accused her of having telephone relationship with an unknown man. Later, he brought her home only to be gunned down by her brother in the middle of the village as he was convinced Shahin's husband had tarnished her reputation. Shahin's murder was met by fierce reaction of women activists who accompanied her body to the cemetery and spoke of the issue of honour killings (2008).
6- In August 2008, Fereshteh Nejati was brutally murdered by her father and uncle who was a drug dealer. She was the 3rd child in the family. Her mother was divorced by her father and committed to a mental hospital due to maltreatment and psychological disorders.
   Fereshteh separated from her husband and returned to family home. But her step mother accused her of having a relationship with a man. Fereshteh fled from home and went to the centre where her mother was kept but she was refused to stay although she said she will work for free. Second time she tried to cross the border to Iraq but was captured and returned home. Her father was warned and made a written statement to take care of her. Few nights later, he cut her throat and her body was knifed. It was revealed by the coroner that she had been a virgin as her husband had been impotent a fact she kept secret. Her murder brought much objection in town and about 4,000 people attended her funeral. The murderer was set free after 8 months as Fereshteh's mother was incapable to seek retribution and her son was bribed with a car.
7- Golbahar Hosseini from Dezali village was hit by a blunt object in front of her daughter by her husband and left on a road to die. He claimed she had been thrown out of the car, a matter which proved untrue. The murderer spend 3 years in prison and released on payment of Diyeh (blood money). (2007)
8- Someyeh Karimi, mother of 2 was being suspicious of having a relationship with a man. Her husband and brothers attacked her with knife and buried her in a shallow grave when she was still alive and drove over it by car.

9- Zeinab, from Chavelkan-eVazir in Marivan fled to Iraqi Kurdistan because of violence at home. Her father's family gave her assurances to return to see her children. On return, she was detained by the border guards and released by guarantees given by her father and brothers. Zeinab was murdered on the way to Marivan. (2004)
10- Fatemeh, a young woman from Golanvillage in Marivan found out of her husband's relationship with a woman in the family. Her husband and the lover conspired to murder her with knife. Fatemeh's husband spent only 4 years in prison and was released on payment of Deyeh.
11- Sowibeh Ghaderi, mother of 3 from Shahidar village in Marivan ran away with a man, called Hamzeh Mohammadi. Her brothers track them down one night. Hamzeh managed to run away but Sowibeh was badly knifed. The researcher met her in hospital but was not permitted to of take photos of her. She died and her brother Bahamn was detained and put in prison where he confessed he was sorry but he did it to save their honour (2013).
12- Safron Mohammadi from Hezarkhani village in Marivan, mother of 5 met a young man and was divorced 2 years before she was killed. She ran away with him a week before her end. As she did not have a place to stay she stayed in her lover's father's home. The news spread through village and public opinion turned against her father and brothers so much that taxis refused to give them a ride. The family moved to Marivan under pressure. When they found out of Safron's whereabouts, they persuaded her to come out to talk. As she appeared, the father put a rope round her neck and dragged her to the village and shot her there. Then he went to the mosque and informed the people through loudspeaker that he killed her daughter. She was killed on 8th March 2013. A number of activists went to the village to attend Safron's funeral but were turned down. She was buried at a corner in the cemetery.
Safon's father admitted in prison that he was sorry to have killed her daughter. But people's pressures were so much that he had to stop going to the mosque and then migrate from the village. He was released after 1 year by the consent of Safron's family.
13- Bahareh A. 24 from Sanandaj was murdered by her father accused of having relationship with a man she loved and wanted to marry (2008).
14- Bahareh Saidi was threatened by her father and brother that if she had relationship with a man she will be in danger. She was murdered by her brother with 6 bullets. (2008)
15- Somayeh, 17 was murdered by her father on suspicion of pregnancy before marriage. (2011)
16- Soheila Fatehi, 21 and mother of 2 in Basath, Kamyaran was murdered by her brother. He wanted to save the family's honor.
17- Fatemeh Azadi, 23 from Varyan Sofla valley in Kamyaran refused to marry forcefully and wished to marry the man he loved. She was gunned by her brother (2011).
18- Sarwah, 19 from a village in Dehgolan in Kurdistan ran away from home because of extreme violence. Her brother found her in Sanandaj and cut her throat (2015).
19- Chiman Piri, 32 a divorcee from Dareh Pir valley was accused by her ex-husband of having a relationship and was murdered by a blunt object.(2014)

Conclusion

The list contains 32 cases but due to word restrictions 19 cases are registered here. Human rights activists all over the world have raised the issue of honour killings through seminars, workshops, demonstrations and activism. Honour killing is a worldwide phenomenon which requires a worldwide effort by the governments to change laws and education to transform minds and more than that to eliminate violence against women in other areas alongside honour killings.