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Statement submitted by Federation Europeenne des Centres de Recherche et d’Information sur le Sectarisme (FECRIS), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Leaving no one left behind in women's full effective participation and decision-making in public life should consider the role of former female sect members. Severe and all forms violence against women cry out for a representative voice of direct contact that surviving cult members can truly offer society and policy makers for the future.

We at the Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme stand behind many the priorities of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as applied to the fundamental human rights of women and other female cult and former sect members. It is most important to have a representative voice and venue provided for by the 65th Commission on the Status of Women. This commission has provided progress and accomplishments against discrimination and reduced legislative discrimination. The need to move forward and achieve needed goals is where representative voices need to be heard. Former women cult members represent a serious community whose voices cries out for justice and understanding. Each female sect member requires human rights protection and that is where the journey begins. Many loyal cult members and extremist Islamic sects live in totalitarian and closed communities insulated from the outside world and mainstream accountable societies. A crisis of abuse and various forms of violence violate the rights of women but especially female minor members with sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. Unwanted marriages and forced pregnancies enslave female sect members with many human rights violations require justice and legal remedies with real policies that directly address this ongoing phenomenon.

In order to address the elimination of violence among female cult members and it is important to identify how it expresses itself to our Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme community. The 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women has provided this venue to address these and other critical areas of progress toward women and restored rights. There are other new frontiers of expression toward female rights to be expressed and explored especially for a marginalized community that is not fully understood in mainstream society at large. Most of the political and international legal professions have limited knowledge with firsthand experience concerning this hardship cult abused community. It is an important and pressing priority to address these ongoing issues that needed to be expressed with representative voices in public life. In the twenty-first century many who are in the legal and political community have representative voices born out of their life work and direct experiences. The abuse and violation of women in cults and extremist Islamic sects demonstrate how human rights policies need to be addressed with specific remedies in international law.

When we consider the matter of cultural empowerment where cultural values and social norms impact woman and other cult afflicted females. The power imbalance between the authoritarian pyramid predominant male structure in most closed sect organizations. Many of these groups define females as lesser beings and some even at a slave like subservient levels. The sheer cruelty exercised by many cults exposed by the mainstream media globally, points us to protect the full range of rights for sect women and minor age females.

It is also important to look at civic empowerment where improvement in women's participation in civil society agencies where women engage the activities of the state. Former female cult victims who receive healthy healing and recovery have much to offer civil society. Like many others who survive racial, work place, economic and other forms of discrimination. These people have truly changed the course of the twentieth and twenty-first century with many advances in human rights

and legal protections. It is important to hear the representative voices of female former cult members. They reveal to the outside world through civil society channels what abusive and deceptive sect groups hide through high priced legal barriers. One of the core features of destructive cults is financial exploitation where former members and their families suffer economic devastation. Financial transparency in cults is truly lacking especially to mainstream society where these same sects will seek government funds to cover whatever deductions are legally accessible to them and hidden fraudulent claims. Female cult victims are a treasure of vital financial information that exposes the lack of accountability to government and related tax authorities. Senior former cult women lack the retirement benefits due to cult organization policies that provide no retirement funds for most cult members. The government member states will end up funding retirement casualties that lack lifetime employment retirement benefits in many cult groups.

When we look at decision-making empowerment that impacts exercising government in the authority policy making process it is important to have a representative voice; and, we at the Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme believe that qualified former cult afflicted women leadership voices need to be heard and understood. Where female laws and regulations lead toward policy empowerment and remove discrimination that injures female cult members. Human rights requires informed consent and this is sorely lacking within many of the female membership of destructive cults. Primary factual testimony and evidence needs communication channels where the 65th Commission on the Status of Women can facilitate meaningful policy making changes and accountability. The health care community could provide sorely need resources and social protection. Female cult afflicted members lack the resources and adversarial cult related barriers that deny access to critical health care. Many cult groups suffer from unwanted deaths and lifetime health injuries due to lack of necessary medical attention. Critical funding that is needed is not available from within cult policies and practices with medical health care provisions. The government member states will end up funding health care casualties that lack lifetime employment health care benefits in many sect organizations. We need representative women advocates defending the rights of such a population with reply appropriate policies to advance the human condition.

The rights of female minor cult children are subjected to unspeakable physical, sexual abuse and gross violations. The challenge we face is the hidden nature of these horrible crimes and the lack of required transparency and accountability. The political and legal will demand responsible action and women who survive these tragedies know first-hand the deep dark hidden world that protects these predators with well-funded cult resources. We need women advocates for the rights and protection of these true victims who have a serious voice with the Commission on the Status of Women. Policy contributions begin with voices being heard and accurate understanding having been communicated. We at the Fédération Européenne des Centres de Recherche et d'Information sur le Sectarisme sustain women former cult members. We can provide qualified professional specialists who can contribute relevant support toward advancing public policy achievements in the arena of problem solving towards a better future.

In 2020 with this year's commission objective to develop a more comprehensive measure of women's participation and empowerment is designed to work those who are underrepresented. This includes women cult survivors who need support. It is important to observe when dealing with those female sect victims who speak out about abuses and deception face harassment and threats like other persecuted entities needing civil society protections and appropriate human rights policies for tomorrow.

The world of the cults is immersed with leaders who attain access to political power and great personal wealth. The grueling ordeal for some women in these relationships with authoritarian sect leaders is subjected to real physical and sexual violence. Getting through the barriers of silence that hide these violent abuses needs certain legal tools and venues the 65th Commission on the Status of Women make assessable. Former female cult leader wives and inner circle women provide inside information that the outside world would have great difficulty in accessing. Networking with these afflicted women would provide access to the subjugation of women and the serious power imbalances that impacts the political arena of cultic agendas. The Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is one resource that could provide improvement for female sect victims from abuse and various forms of violence with public institutions and policy makers.

It would be most helpful to advance these contributions towards ensuring women's full and effective participation in decision-making in public life.
