WHRD MENA COALITION INTERVENTION[[1]](#footnote-1)

* Based on our work, we’ve observed that the patterns of violations against WHRDs increased in 2019 and 2020 witnessed an increased crackdown on WHRDs. This is happening in a context of reprisal against the mass protest movements in the past year, whether in Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon. We’ve also witnessed an increased incarceration and detention of WHRDs and rise of assassination and death threats where we have lost WHRDs in Iraq and Libya. It is also important to understand that this is happening with a global backlash and demonization of WHRDs and feminist movement.
* However, with covid-19 and lockdown measures, WHRDs who fought so hard to remain in the public sphere were pushed back to the private sphere, back to their homes which are not always safe, and most importantly, spaces in which they are the main caretakers. Additionally, closed borders and increased border control have also hindered access to safety and other protection measures for people who are facing violence whether in private or public spheres, or in most cases, both.
* This also exacerbated the burn out conditions many WHRDs have found themselves in after the many unprecedented challenges which dominated the work in the region.
* Based on conversations with our members, we have noticed this as a shared experience, in one form or another, with domination of politics of fear, isolation and uncertainties. Which is why we’ve decided to focus on the hidden cost whrds pay because of their work in the public sphere in our #SheDefends campaign for the 16days of activism where our members believe it is important to remind others that they are not alone, despite closed borders.
* In the light of our new lived reality, we believe that this should be an opportunity for us to think and work collectively. The ongoing circumstances present themselves as an opportunity to re-imagine and reflect on protection and safety, and to think of the multilayered complexities of violence the region and what that means for WHRDs today. This is why we extend an invitation to the working group and others parties, orgs network interested to think together of means for which access can be provided to whrds and women who need protection. The Coalition is happy to facilitate discussions between those interested and our members at any time. We could think of a mechanism to be enacted where the working group could collaborate with partners, other bodies in the UN and organizations that provide instant relief. It is important to think collectively not only of emergency support mechanisms but also sustainable protection initiatives and get together and make it happen.

1. This intervention could unfortunately not be delivered due to connection issues [↑](#footnote-ref-1)