

Dear Dr. Edit,

I am very glad to cooperate with Women without Borders. You are a very crucial partner for us in Women Journalists Without Chains, not because of the slight similarity of the name of the two organizations but because we have many things in common and we very much agree on objectives and concepts, especially those related to challenging terrorism and extremism. We agree also on our vision of how to deal with the issues of extremism and terrorism. I have come to that conclusion after meeting Fahmia, your wonderful coordinator here in Yemen, listening to her explanation of the mission of Women without Borders and her talks about your personality, strength, and influence.

Terrorism and extremism are issues that our organization had touched upon before the world started to talk about al-Qaeda and its increasing presence in Yemen. We see that extremism is not only carrying weapons, but it is rejecting and marginalizing the 'other.' Consequently, it pushes the 'other' to resort to violent recourses to defend his point of view or to prove his existence. Using weapons, bombings, and other terrorist acts is a result of a big accumulative process that has started with disrespecting and marginalizing the 'other' combined with hostile attitudes towards him. This process usually starts in early age. That means that extremism is a result of a failure in raising our children, a failure in culture and the absence of belief in the value of dialogue and coexistence.

This week I was hosted by a number of channels and newspapers to talk about the situation in Yemen in terms of politics, human rights, al-Qaeda, and terrorism. The last of these interviews was just yesterday on the al-Jazeera Channel, and the presenter asked me about the possibility of women getting involved in terrorism in Yemen and the possibility of women in combating terrorism. My answer was that women have more opportunities in challenging extremism and terrorism than men due to woman's nature in having patience, containing others, hating killing and bloodshed and—more importantly—women have tremendous feelings of love and sacrifice towards their husbands, children, and communities that is enough to enhance the attitude of coexistence, respect, trust, and listening to the other. This, in turn, will lead drying the roots and sources of extremism. Extremism stems from the culture of rejecting the other and the culture of hating the other. Therefore, there is no solution other than spreading the culture of coexistence and dialogue, skills that women master and possess.

A Yemeni woman cannot be part of terrorism because she herself is suffering from terrorism. She is banned from taking part in public life, fearing she will mingle with men (which is forbidden). The intellectual terrorism that is practiced against woman by a large segment of men in the Yemeni society makes her ineffective in the public domain either politically or socially. A Yemeni woman without doubt has no role in recruiting or training terrorists in order to kill innocent people. If the policy of excluding women from public life and preventing her from effectively taking part in developing this country and challenging terrorism along with men continues, the culture of extremism will flourish and the ramifications will be disastrous.

I have watched the film that Women without Borders produced (*Journeys Through Darkness*), and I liked it very much. What I liked the most is that we even agree on the means and mechanisms of combating terrorism and extremism. I have had this impression when you insisted on having the reflections and thoughts of workshop participants. We absolutely agree on the importance of documentaries, radio, and TV programs in challenging extremism and terrorism because they simply have the capacity to reach a large segment of society.

If you just know what TV and radio is capable of doing in Yemen to form attitudes and culture—the illiteracy rate is 50% and 70% of population lives in rural areas where radio and TV are the only

sources of information.

I am hopeful that we together can reach to the depths of community and civic society that is capable to take part in combating terrorism and extremism.

All good wishes, longing to see you soon.

Tawakkol Karman