



‘Glocal’ Voices: Discussing Feminist Blogging as Political Practice

The fourth event of Asfari Institute’s Feminist Roundtable Series titled “ ‘Glocal’ Voices: Discussing Feminist Blogging as Political Practice ” successfully took place on November 30, 2021 from 8-9:30 pm (Beirut Time) on Zoom in collaboration with the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies in Cyprus. The webinar featured a fruitful discussion between guest speakers **Christina Kaili**, Researcher at the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies in Nicosia and **Farah Daibes**, Program Manager of the Regional Political Feminist Project at FES MENA. The discussion was moderated by **Paola Salwan Daher**, Senior Global Advocacy Advisor at the Center for Reproductive Rights in Geneva and Board Member of Urgent Action Funds.

In this webinar, the guest speakers discussed the critical role feminist activists’ blogging plays as a tool for political action and mobilization of people during protest and post-protest discourses in the MENA region. The speakers also shed light on the various forms of threats and punishments that feminists who maintain such blogs are subjected to from oppressive and patriarchal systems of political power.

Moreover, this roundtable discussion also revealed how feminist blogging serves as a fundamental strategy for retaining the memories and voices of phenomenal feminist activists, many of whom are no longer with us today. Kaili mentioned the story of Lina Ben Mhenni, a Tunisian blogger who courageously used her platform to expose the police brutality used against herself and other protesters during the demonstrations held against dictator Ben Ali’s regime by sharing pictures and videos of the corpses of young women who were being tortured and killed by the security forces. By the same token, the speakers also discussed how feminist blogs function as a form of historical archives, providing critical analysis of both individual and collective feminist movements which can help rising bloggers relate to and learn from, for protests are still very evident in present-day society.

Furthermore, the guest speakers also talked about how feminist blogs create safe spaces for women to share their personal narratives, including the violence and oppression they are subjected to in their private domains. The politicizing of such personal narratives has moved women’s experiences from the private to the public sphere, thereby giving rise to novel movements of change and reproducing a certain kind of feminism.

Finally, Kaili and Daibes explained how feminist blogs have led to the formation of communities of solidarity, most notably among women that have undergone different forms of violence, be it sexual or structural, by various state and non-state actors. Such solidarity networks continue to challenge the patriarchal norms imposed on them through political institutions as well as carry out various consciousness-raising campaigns.