

Cyber

An illustration of a classroom scene. A teacher, a woman in a brown hijab and long dress, stands with her back to the viewer, looking towards a group of students. Two students in the foreground are seated at desks, wearing green dresses and white headscarves. They are looking towards the teacher. The room has large windows with wooden frames, a ceiling fan, and a tiled floor. The lighting is soft, suggesting an indoor setting.

comics as eyewitness

May 2022

Award issue

Mexico

Sudan

Zimbabwe

Afghanistan

front line defenders

cypher

/ˈsaɪfər/

The dictionary definition of cypher is 'a secret or disguised way of writing'. In many ways, this is the essence of comics storytelling – the image, rather than the word, is a disguise for many words, that can convey meaning, emotion, and can re/frame an entire narrative.

Rap and hip hop culture has taken the word and ascribed a new meaning: 'an informal gathering of rappers, beatboxers and/or breakdancers in a circle, in order to jam musically together.' This, too, we find relevant to this project, in that we are bringing together artists and HRDs in freestyle collaboration of activism and art with the aim of informing, elevating and inspiring.

For us, this captures the spirit of why we are working in comics and guides how we facilitate the process of creative production.

Adam Shapiro (Publisher) and Beldan Sezen (Creative Director)

Cover art by Sayed Mohammad Hussaini

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frontlinedefenders.org/cypher



Cypher 17 - The Award issue



adam shapiro

This Award edition of the 'zine celebrates incredibly courageous human rights defenders from Afghanistan, Belarus, Mexico, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

For each of these men and women, defending the vulnerable and marginalized and acting with courage in the face of danger is part of who they are; courage borne of personal commitment and personal loss. When we honor these human rights defenders, we hold up all of who they are, including that which lives on in memory manifested by their life work.

Cypher brings talented artists together with human rights defenders with a near impossible task - help depict their work, lives and stories through this medium of comics storytelling. And with every edition, we the readers get to bear witness to the brilliance of the art combined with the power of the story. For both the artists and the HRDs, the work is personal, intimate and necessary - and we hope Cypher helps bring that closer and makes these struggles part of our collective consciousness.

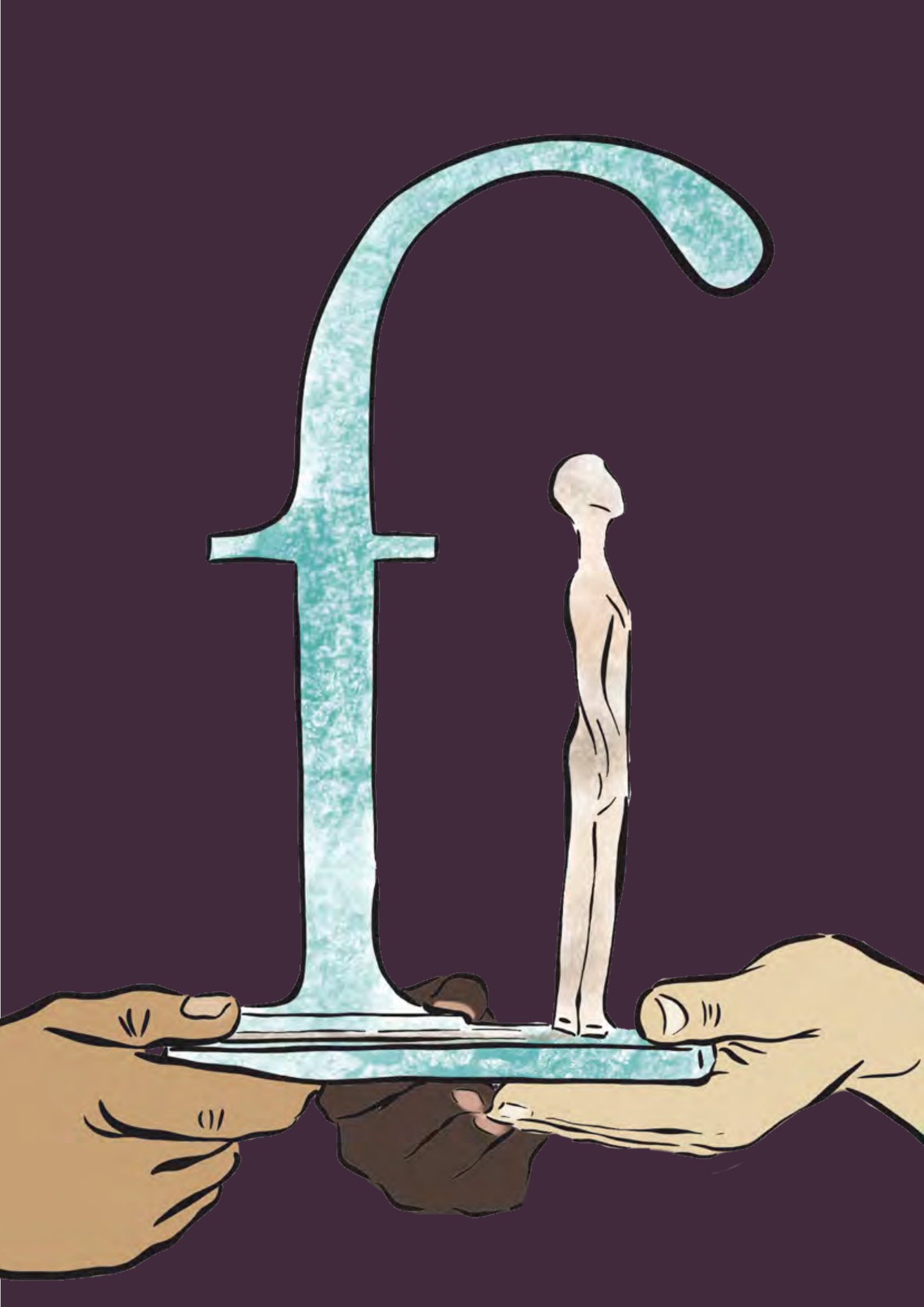
Note: You will not find a comic in this edition about the human rights defender from Belarus out of security concerns. We hope we can publish it in a future edition when it is safer, and when being a human rights defender in Belarus does not mean risking being criminalized, beaten or worse.



beldan sezen

Knowledge is power, and every day human rights defenders in their roles as activists, teachers and educators in all corners of the world risk their lives to spread knowledge and fight those who try to restrict it. CYPHER is proud to honor these human rights defenders in this month's Awards' Issue beautifully illustrating their stories as they each continue to serve as a torch, guiding us out of darkness and into a better world.

May 2022



Mexico

Javier and María del Tránsito

Javier and María del Tránsito, teachers and human rights defenders from Salvatierra, Guanajuato, Mexico, had dedicated their lives to teaching. When the crisis of disappearances – a widespread phenomenon in Mexico whereby people are taken/ disappear without warning – increased in their area, and personally affected them, they shifted their time and energy to activism on the issue of disappearances.

According to data from the National Search Commission (CNB), this year 372 people have been reported as disappeared in the state of Guanajuato. On 29 February 2020, Maria and Javier's daughter Guadalupe, also a teacher, went missing. In February 2021, thanks to the work of the Barajas family and the collective work of other families also searching for their loved ones, Guadalupe's body was identified in a clandestine grave along with 80 other bodies. This highlighted the crisis of disappearances in the state that the government had failed to adequately address.

After finding their daughter; Javier, Mária Tránsito and Javier's son (Javier Junior) continued searching for other disappeared persons in the state, meeting members of other collectives and advancing the search for truth and justice with the authorities. Javier Barajas Junior joined the State Search Commission to support other families and relatives of missing persons. Unfortunately, this led to Javier being killed on 29 May 2021 by individuals linked to the disappearance of his sister. This tragedy caused Javier and María del Tránsito to leave the state to protect themselves.

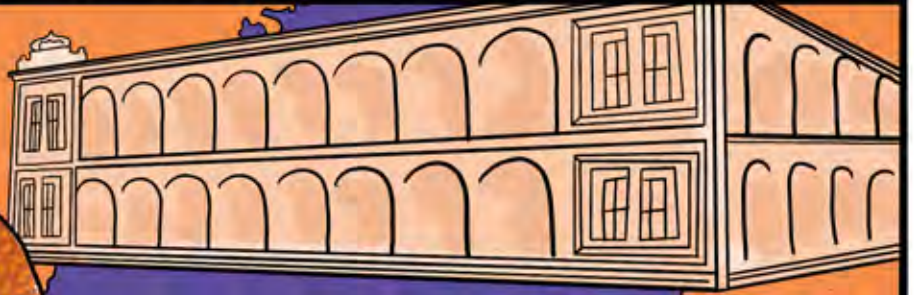
Despite the pain of having lost their son and daughter, and the threats and risks they faced in trying to find the disappeared, Javier and María del Tránsito have continued to demand truth and justice for the disappearance and murder of their children and for the thousands of other families who have lost loved ones with no answers or action from authorities. They continue to work with collectives searching for the disappeared, and have tried to spread their message further by sharing their circumstances and situation with international bodies such as the CED Committee, embassies and other authorities. They have promoted actions to make visible the plight of the families of the disappeared and the need for justice, the consequences of the illegal flow of arms from the USA, and the risks faced by defenders who continue to demand truth and justice.

Artist: Martha Muñoz Aristizabal

Estudio Plumbago is a social design studio based in Mexico City. We accompany activists, organisms, organizations, and institutions in the production of graphic materials for the spread of knowledge, rights, and defense of social causes.

www.estudioplumbago.com

I MET MY HUSBAND IN ACÁMBARO, WHERE WE STUDIED AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS COLLEGE.



WE WENT FROM ACÁMBARO TO SALVATIERRA, LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO SETTLE.

SALVATIERRA: SALVA: SAVE; TIERRA: LAND. THE LAND THAT SAVES.

SALVATIERRA

WE CAME TO SALVATIERRA TO LIVE; IT WAS A QUIET PLACE. WE MOVED TO COLONIA 15 DE MAYO, A NEIGHBORHOOD MOSTLY OF TEACHERS.

LUPITA WANTED LOTS OF THINGS. TO STUDY GASTRONOMY, PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE... SHE FINALLY DECIDED TO STUDY TO BE A SCHOOLTEACHER, WITH THE IDEA OF MAYBE DOING SOMETHING ELSE LATER.



BUT SHE LIKED IT. SHE WORKED AT SCHOOLS AND THEN SHE GOT A MASTER'S IN CHILD EDUCATION. SHE TOOK CLASSES ABOUT EVERYTHING...



JAVIER WANTED THE OPPOSITE. HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE A TEACHER. HE ENDED UP STUDYING LAW. JAVIER GOT INVOLVED WITH THE PEOPLE WHOSE CASES HE TOOK ON.

WE TAUGHT THEM TO HELP SINCE THEY WERE KIDS. WE GAVE OUT FOOD IN THE COMMUNITY WHERE JAVIER WORKED. LATER, LUPITA ORGANIZED MEALS FOR IMMIGRANTS, WHILE JAVIER WORRIED ABOUT THE VULNERABLE PEOPLE HE MET THROUGH HIS WORK. I DON'T KNOW IF I DID THE RIGHT THING, BUT I TAUGHT THEM TO LIVE: HELPING, WORKING, LOVING.





LUPITA WENT MISSING ONE DAY WHEN SHE CAME TO VISIT SALVATEERRA. SHE WENT DOWNTOWN TO BUY BREAKFAST. SHE NEVER CAME BACK.



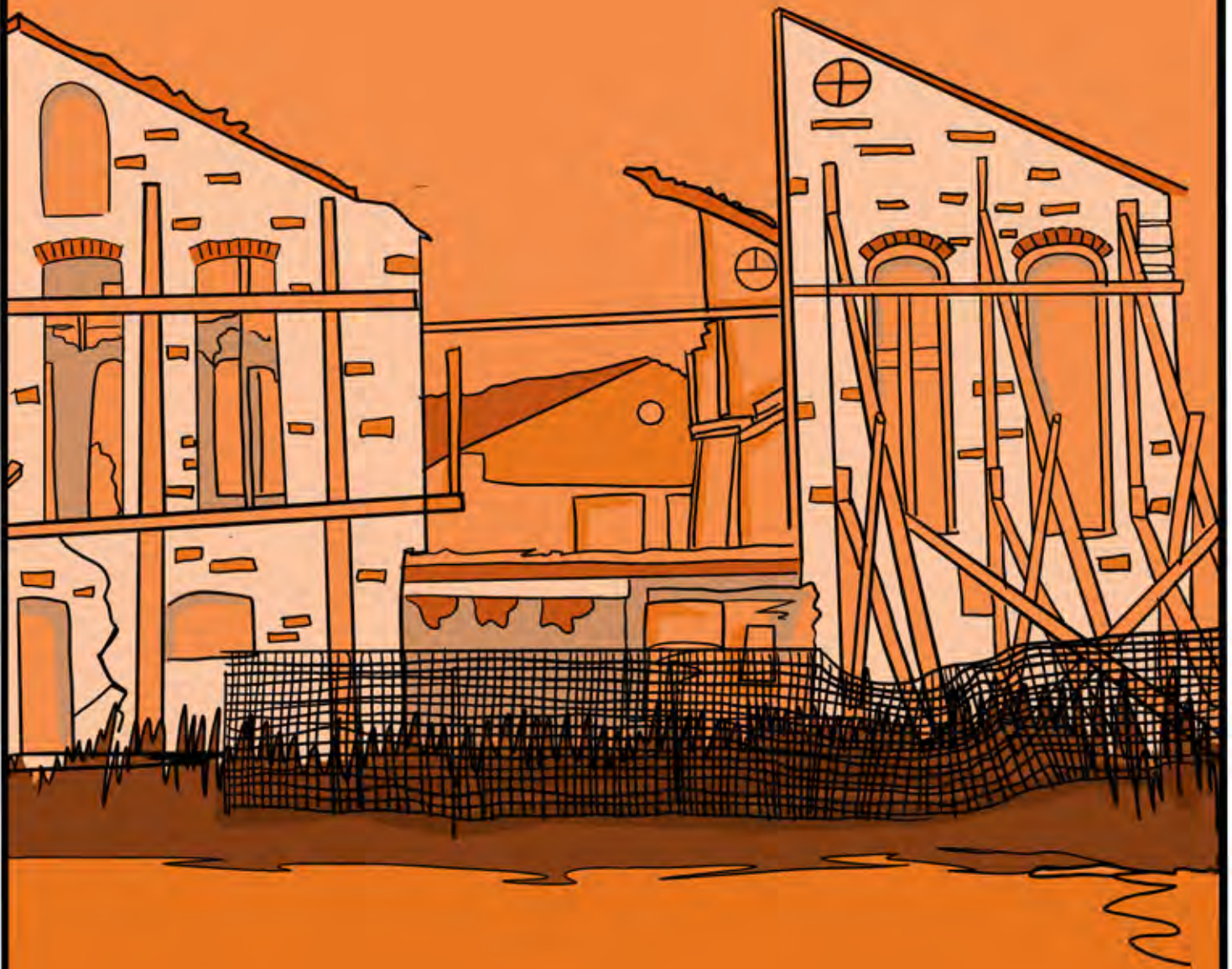
WE LOOKED FOR HER EVERYWHERE. IT WAS LIKE SHE JUST VANISHED. AT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, WE SAW THE DANGER FACED BY FAMILIES IN MEXICO WHEN THEY SEARCH FOR THEIR MISSING.

*MISSING



I WONDER WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THIS COUNTRY AND WHY THERE IS SO MUCH PAIN. WE JOINED GROUPS LOOKING FOR MISSING PEOPLE, WHO TOOK US IN LIKE A FAMILY. FIRST WE WERE VOLUNTEERS. THEN MY SON JAVIER STARTED A TEMPORARY JOB THERE.


SOMETIMES WE USED TO GET EXTORTION CALLS. "IF YOU GIVE ME FIVE, TEN THOUSAND PESOS, I'LL GIVE YOU LUPITA," THEY SAID. IT WAS NEVER TRUE. ONE DAY, MY HUSBAND GOT AN UNUSUAL CALL. "GO TO THE SAN JUAN OIL SHOP," THEY SAID. "YOU'LL FIND SOMETHING FROM LUPITA THERE."



AT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, THEY SAID THERE WERE NO GRAVES, BUT THEY AGREED TO CHECK THE PLACE IF WE PAID FOR THE EXCAVATION.

PROHIBIDO EL PASO*

*DO NOT ENTER



MAINTAINING THE MEMORY OF THE MISSING. STICK THE ROD IN THE GROUND AND CHECK IF IT COMES OUT WITH LIME OR IF IT GIVES OFF THE SMELL OF DEATH.

REMEMBER THAT EACH BODY THAT COMES OUT IS A FAMILY MEMBER OF SOMEONE WHO IS WAITING FOR THEM.

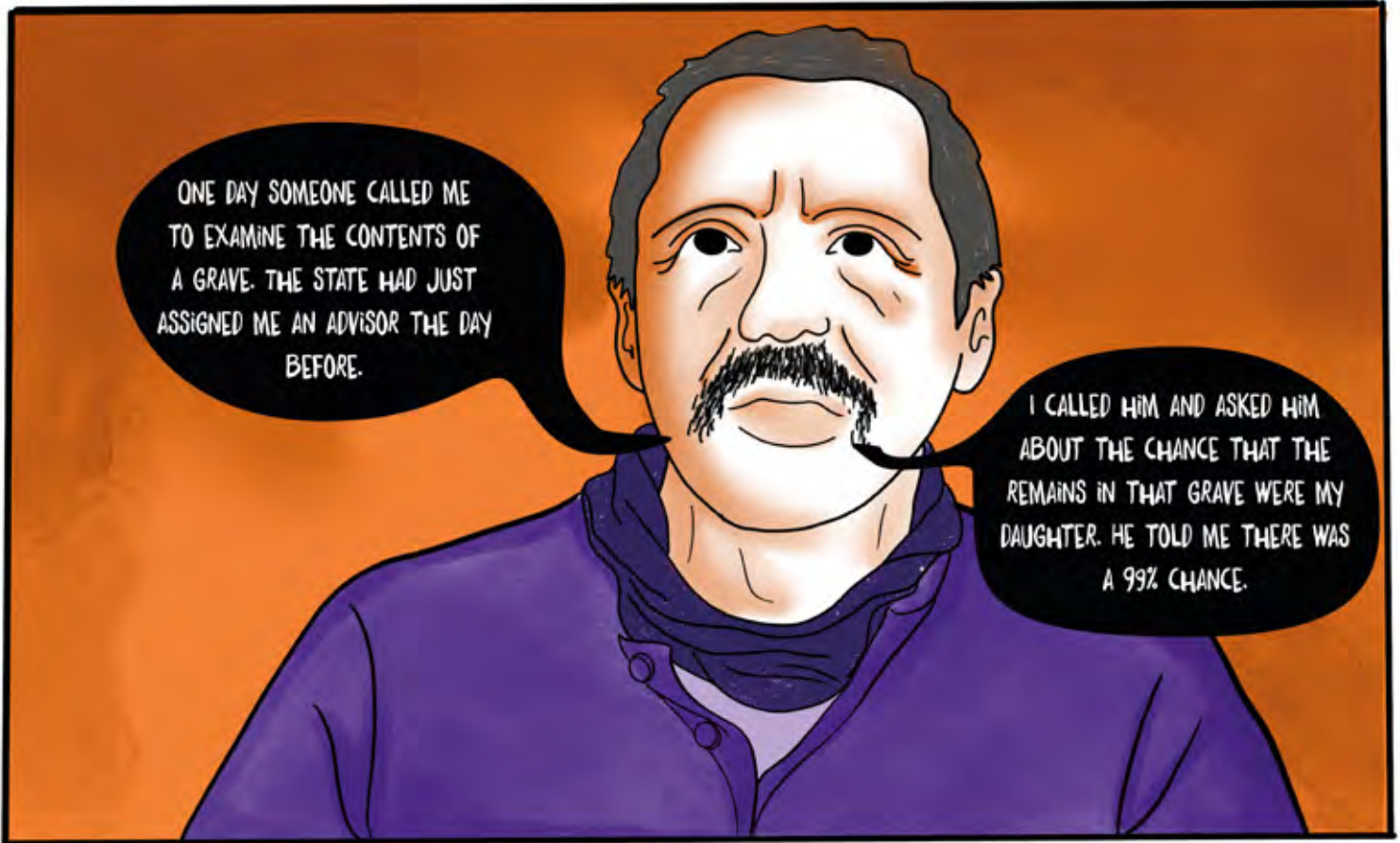


THEY SENT US A PHOTO OF A WOMAN WHO LOOKED JUST LIKE LUPITA AT A MOTORCYCLE SHOP IN CELAYA. IT WASN'T HER. THE OTHER DAY, WE HEARD NOISE IN THE GARDEN AND MY WIFE SUSPECTS THAT THEY'RE WATCHING US.



I THINK I'M ON THE RIGHT PATH, EVEN THOUGH IT HURTS.

MY DAUGHTER WAS AT THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME.



ONE DAY SOMEONE CALLED ME TO EXAMINE THE CONTENTS OF A GRAVE. THE STATE HAD JUST ASSIGNED ME AN ADVISOR THE DAY BEFORE.

I CALLED HIM AND ASKED HIM ABOUT THE CHANCE THAT THE REMAINS IN THAT GRAVE WERE MY DAUGHTER. HE TOLD ME THERE WAS A 99% CHANCE.



IN THE GRAVE IN SALVATIERRA, WE FOUND THE REMAINS OF EIGHTY PEOPLE, AND LUPITA'S REMAINS.

I NEVER BELIEVED THERE WERE SO MANY BODIES THERE, BECAUSE NO ONE SAID ANYTHING. MAYBE IT WAS AN OPEN SECRET.

WE TOOK OUR DAUGHTER AND BROUGHT HER TO THE PLACE WHERE SHE WOULD REST. I FELT ENORMOUS PAIN, BUT I WASN'T WORRIED ANY MORE. THE NEXT DAY, I WENT OUT TO THE SEARCH.



I REMEMBER THAT A FRIEND THERE SAID, "TEACHER, YOU BURIED YOUR DAUGHTER YESTERDAY AND YOU'RE HERE TODAY." I WAS THERE FOR THEM, BECAUSE I WANTED TO HELP THEM STOP WORRYING.

JAVIER SAID, "LET'S KEEP GOING DAD, WE WON'T LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND. WE'LL KEEP SEARCHING, WHATEVER HAPPENS." THEY KILLED MY SON NOT LONG AFTER THAT. IT WAS ALL PLANNED.



PURO PA'
DELANTE
NO DEJAMOS
A
NINGUNX

*LET'S KEEP GOING

*LET'S KEEP GOING, WE WON'T LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND



I'M HAPPY TO KNOW WHERE MY CHILDREN ARE, TO HAVE A PLACE WHERE I CAN CRY FOR THEM. WHEREVER I AM, I'LL KEEP SEARCHING FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE, NOT JUST FOR MY CHILDREN, BUT FOR ALL THE MISSING PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY.



WHEN WE CAME TO SALVATIERRA, WE WANTED TO GET AWAY FROM THE CITY, WE WERE LOOKING FOR PEACE AND QUIET. AND LOOK AT US NOW.

EVEN SO, IN THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE, I'M HAPPY. I'M GIVING THE BEST OF MYSELF, FOR THE MANY PEOPLE WHO CAN'T.



I'M WITH MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO, WITH ALL THEIR HEART, ARE SEARCHING FOR THEIR MISSING LOVED ONES.



I'M PART OF THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT TOOK ME IN WHEN I NEEDED IT THE MOST.

THOSE OF US WHO ARE SEARCHING ARE MORE THAN COWORKERS. WE'VE MADE A FAMILY. WHEN SOMEONE FALLS DOWN, WE PICK THEM UP AND TELL THEM THAT WE HAVE TO KEEP GOING.



THAT'S WHEN WE REALIZE THAT WE'RE A FAMILY: WE'RE THE FAMILY WE DON'T HAVE ANYMORE.



¡BUSCAREMOS
HASTA
CONTRARIES

LOS BUSCAMOS
COLECTIVO ÁNGELES
DE PIE
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+100
MIL
¿DÓNDE ES

LA LUCHA
SI...

COLECTIVOS
EN PIE
DE LUCHA

MY SON AND DAUGHTER ARE AT REST IN THE EARTH. THEY GUIDE OUR STEPS. THEY'RE HERE WITH US AND THEY HELP US KEEP GOING, BECAUSE WE HAVE AN ENORMOUS COMMITMENT TO ALL THE MISSING PEOPLE, NOT JUST IN MEXICO, BUT IN THE WHOLE WORLD.

BUSCANDO NOS
ENCONTRAMOS

Sudan

Ameira Osman Hamid

Ameira Osman Hamid is a woman human rights defender in Sudan, an engineer, and the Chairperson of the "No to Women Oppression" Initiative. Ameira has advocated for democracy, human rights and women's rights in a context that consistently pushed back against it, standing up to oppression and injustice in the face adversity. The No to Women Oppression Initiative defends women's rights and advocates for legal and judicial reform. Since its establishment in 2009, the No to Women Oppression Initiative launched campaigns against the Public Order Law, which interfered in women's personal and public life. The Public Order Law would dictate what was proper for women to wear and how to act in public life whilst also allotting power to citizens to call and report such behaviours.

The NWO Initiative was founded after women's rights after Sudanese journalist Lubna Ahmed Al-Hussein, and 13 other women, were arrested and faced flogging for wearing trousers in public (a violation against the Public Order Law). The arrests and trials sparked a nation-wide protest against Public Order Laws for its limitation on women's rights. A decade after the NWO's founding and contributions, in November 2019, the law was finally repealed, marking a progression towards inclusivity of women's rights. The Initiative also works with other NGOs and civil society organisations for the collective advocacy and advancement of women's rights.

Ameira has also concentrated her work on helping marginalised women in conflict zones access their rights. Ameira herself was previously a victim of human rights violations – the most notable example being when in 2013, when she was detained after she refused to put on her headscarf.

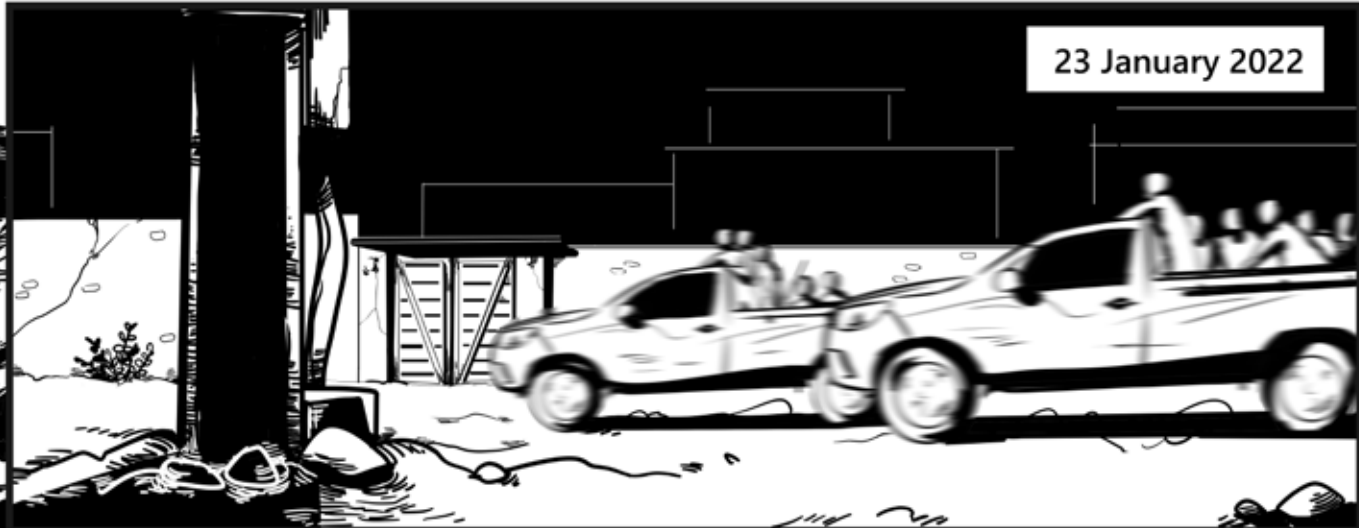
In her position as Chairperson, Ameira and the NWO have launched numerous campaigns against the restrictive Public Order law. For her work in human rights, Ameira has been a victim of unjust arrests and detention. In 2002, she was charged for wearing trousers, and most recently after a raid in January 2022, she was taken from her house in Khartoum to an unknown location by armed security officers in plain clothes, before being released on bail a week later. Nevertheless, Ameira never deterred from her mission and actively participated in peaceful demonstrations, disregarding her personal safety to stand at the helm and bring forwards such progression.

Artist: Malaz Abdallah

Malaz AbdAllah Osman, is a Sudanese artist. Graduated from the electrical and electronics engineering department. She is a self-taught artist and works in the areas of illustration, comics, painting, and graphic design.

[@malaz_abdallah](https://www.instagram.com/malaz_abdallah)

23 January 2022

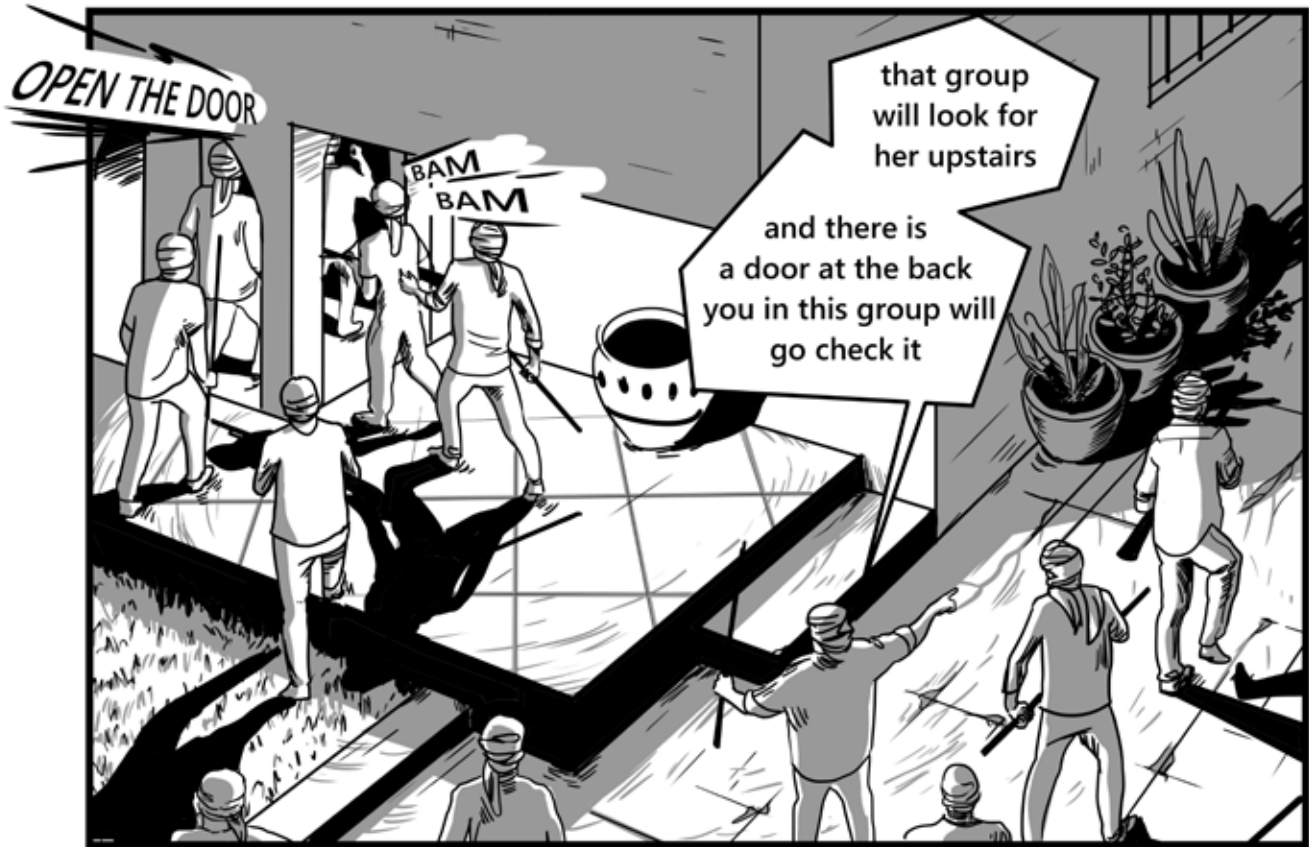


Riyadh-Khartoum



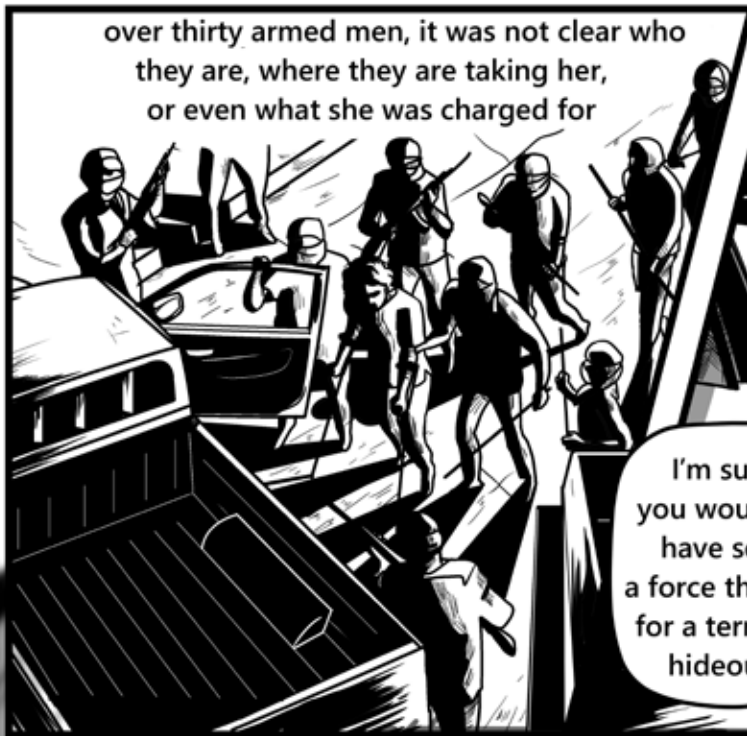
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over thirty armed men, it was not clear who they are, where they are taking her, or even what she was charged for



this is not the first time she gets arrested,




I'm sure you wouldn't have sent a force this big for a terrorist hideout!

Amira Osman Hamid, a fierce political and a human and women's rights activist

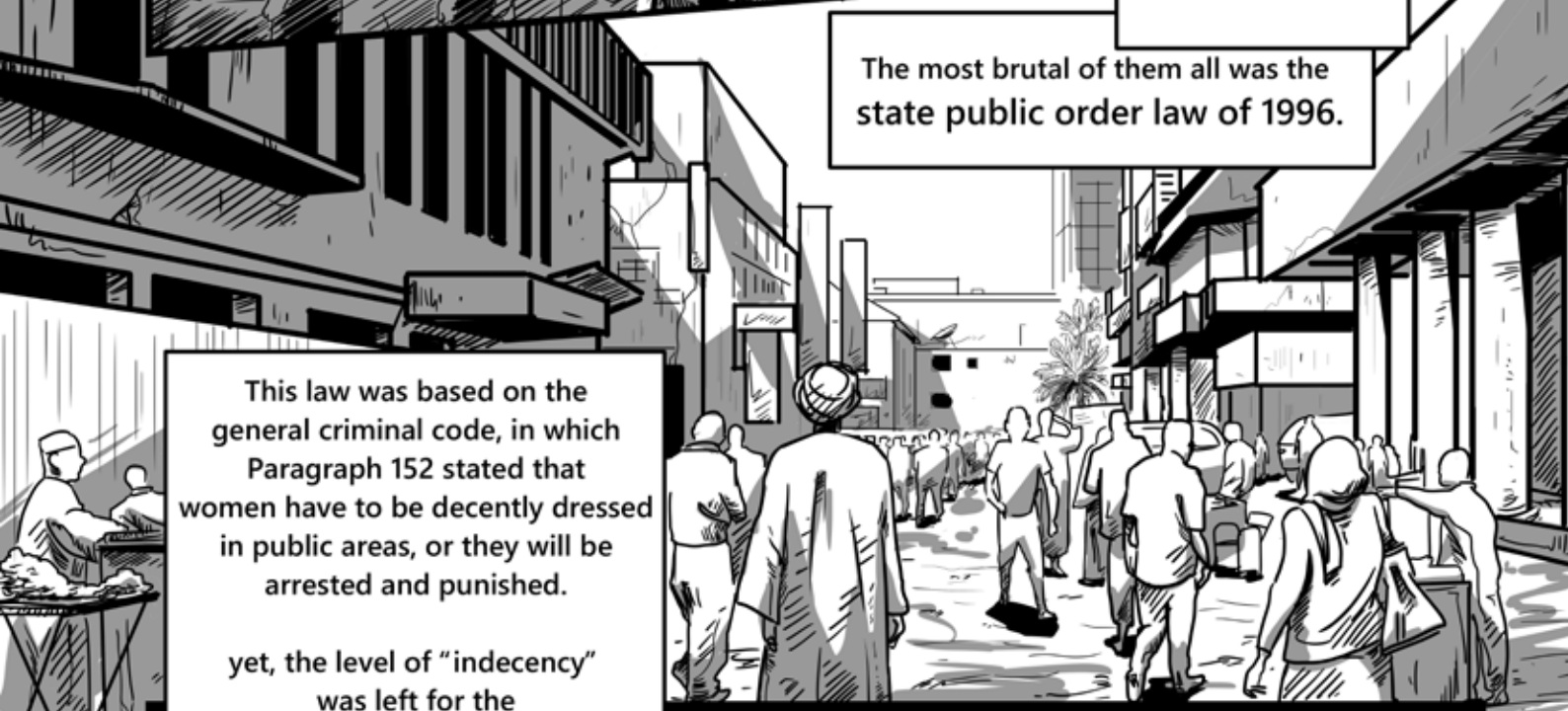
she spent almost half of her life fighting the cruel dictatorships in Sudan and working to end social injustice, especially toward women

These pages only touch on the surface of her long, fierce fight for justice



Before its fall, Omer Albashier's dictatorial regime was a so-called "Islamic system", but like many other corrupt systems, religion was just a shell to cover the real intentions and agendas


To hold a strong grip over the country and its people; their strategy was the legislation of regulations and laws that were claimed to be based on Islam, but their execution was far from Islam.



The most brutal of them all was the state public order law of 1996.

This law was based on the general criminal code, in which Paragraph 152 stated that women have to be decently dressed in public areas, or they will be arrested and punished.

yet, the level of "indecenty" was left for the officer's judgment!



Being arrested under this law subjects you to pay a fine, imprisonment for a month, both, or

Flogging

Amira's first encounter with this law was in 2002 when she was a college student



She was working with her colleague on their graduation thesis at a computer institute. When the officers - who were not even in their uniform - started harassing them



when they did not respond, they arrested her, saying it was for wearing trousers, and her colleague was arrested with her



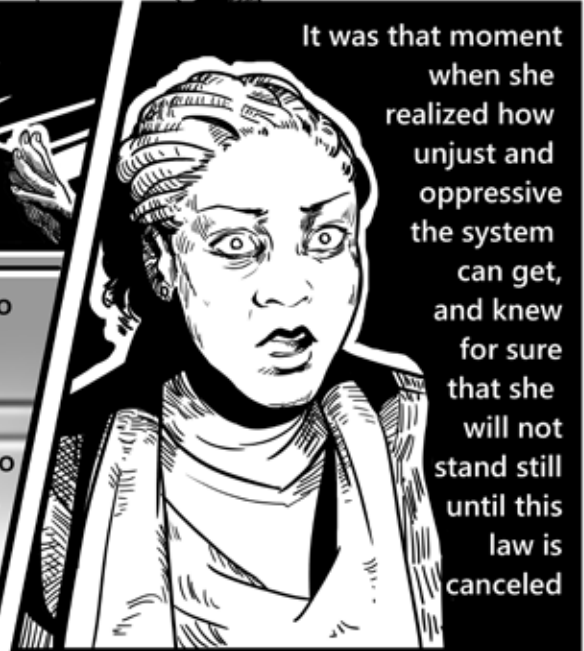
In the court, when she explained the situation and her complaints about the officers' disrespect,



The judge showed no care at all nevertheless,

she was sentenced to either pay a serious fine or be imprisoned for a month.

It was that moment when she realized how unjust and oppressive the system can get, and knew for sure that she will not stand still until this law is canceled



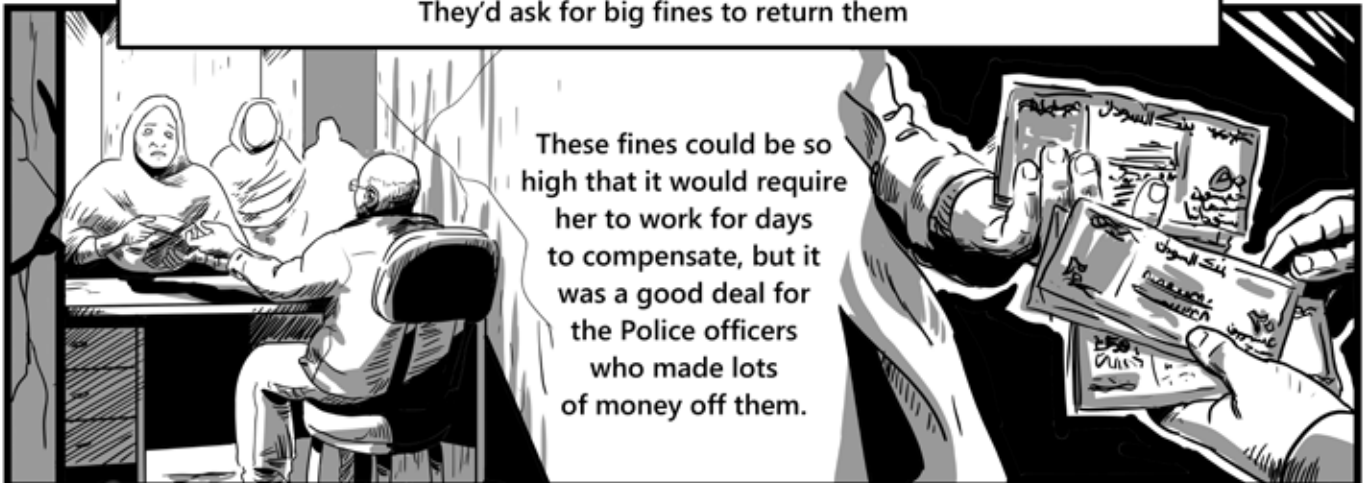
for a number of years, thousands and thousands of women were sentenced to flogging in public. It was mainly for the purpose of intimidation and humiliation



Another section of the law targeted street sellers and most of them were women coming from very poor areas in the country and working selling tea or food on the streets to support their families.



Police would arrest them or confiscate their belongings and work tools. They'd ask for big fines to return them



These fines could be so high that it would require her to work for days to compensate, but it was a good deal for the Police officers who made lots of money off them.

Until 2009, Right upon the arrest of the journalist Lubna Ahmed Al- Hussein for wearing trousers, many activists in Khartoum gathered and protested to advocate for Lubna's case. They founded the "NO to women oppression" initiative

The initiative's goal developed and grew to fight for canceling this oppressive law and advocate for all women's rights in Sudan.



in the beginning, the initiative's only tool was protesting on the streets.



Then, their work expanded to include monitoring rights violations, providing legal and financial support for victims,



making press releases, providing pro bono lawyers during these victims' court hearings,



organizing workshops and awareness-raising campaigns



Police pursuit of Amira and her colleagues never stopped, but they didn't quit, they worked even harder to transform the initiative into a strong body, gathering members of all ages, work fields, ethnicities, and political backgrounds. After a while, Amira became the head of the initiative

later, in 2019, "No to women oppression" was one of the first bodies to sign in the "alliance of the Forces and freedom and change"; the body that was delegated by the people to coordinate protests and negotiate with the transitional military council during the Sudanese revolution.

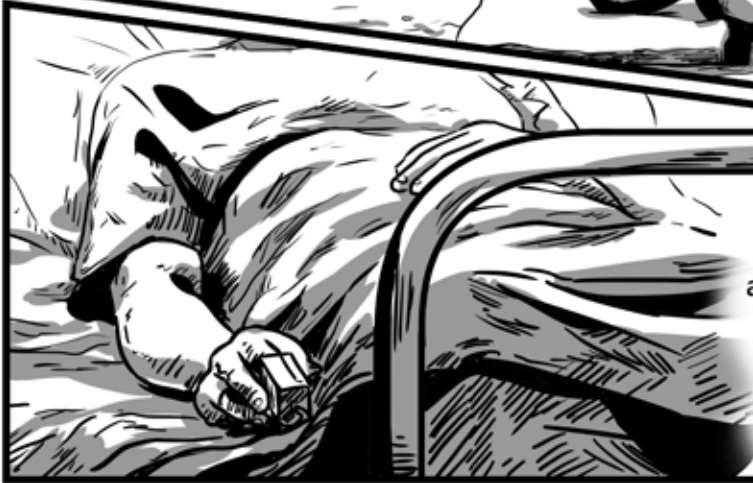


Amira has been a shooting champion in 2008 and 2009, and until 2017 she participated in the Arab shooting championship

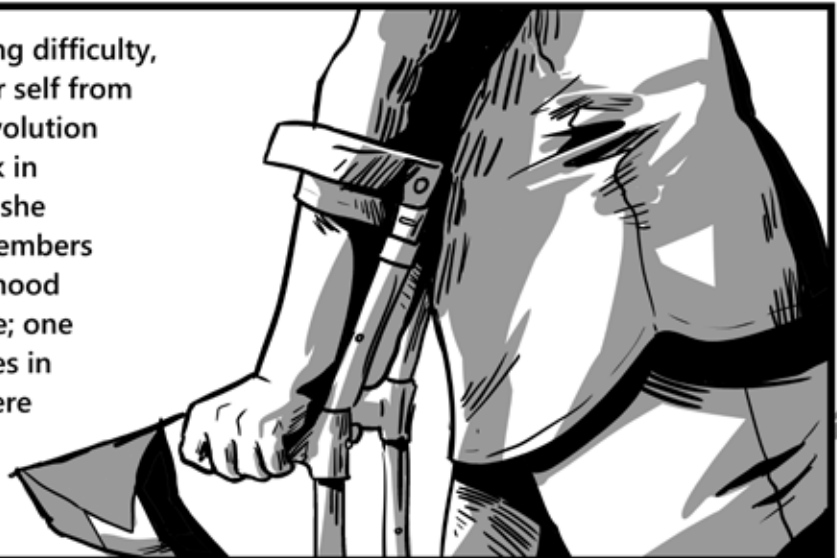


until an unfortunate accident occurred to her in 2017 causing different injuries and fractures and paralyzed her partially.

she went through a long therapy journey until she was finally capable of walking with elbow crutches



despite the pain and walking difficulty, Amira could not help her self from participating in the revolution since its first spark in December 2018 as she was one of the first members in Riyadh neighborhood resistance committee; one of many committees in Khartoum that were responsible for organizing protests



and peaceful sit-ins calling for an end of Al-bashier's ruling. She was always present with her colleagues, arranging and presenting seminars and lectures about human and women's rights



Amira has also become a certified cyber security trainer and trained about three hundred people including journalists, lawyer, and activists who are always targetted by the system on protecting their digital information. she was also a certified on personal protection where she trained people on how to act and behave to stay safe and protect themselves and personal belongings during arrests

Amira's fight at the social level was even tougher, because she knew she was working on fixing deeply rooted damaged mentalities and twisted beliefs, and the result of her success was becoming more known, reaching many local and national media platforms, including the platforms that were owned and fully controlled by the system and used exclusively for the service of its agenda.

even after the sinister military coup in October 2021, Amira will not quit until she sees Sudan and the women of Sudan winning their freedom and living with dignity.



Zimbabwe

Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ

The Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) is a Trade Union working for the improvement of the working conditions of rural teachers as well as the right to education in rural areas of Zimbabwe. Founded in 2009 in response to extremely poor wages and working conditions of rural teachers, the union now counts about 35,000 members and operates in 10 provinces, widening its reach to include non rural teachers.

Since the beginning of the Zimbabwe crisis and the perceived waning of support for the ruling ZANU-PF party, groups such as professional unions, HRDs and civil society in general have been targeted as scape goats for the protracted crisis when they became vocal about issues such as poor governance, corruption and the deterioration in human rights. ARTUZ has worked relentlessly over the past 14 years to improve the working conditions of teachers, and to defend and ensure equal access to education. Their members have been arrested, and attacked for their work.

ARTUZ has pushed for the adoption of the Education Equalization Fund, which would support young girls and pregnant girls in receiving an education. The union also developed and distributed the Remote Teaching Toolkit, which trained 1800 teachers on remote teaching techniques during the pandemic.

In 2015, ARTUZ launched the Safe Schools campaign to prevent schools from being used as political means – students and teachers were forced to attend political rallies. A Masvingo High Court judge delivered a ruling barring Zimbabwe's political parties from forcing or asking students and teachers to attend its rallies. The political parties were also barred from using school premises and buses for political activities. The ruling followed an urgent High Court application by ARTUZ.

In 2018, the union sued the electoral commission for denying teachers the right to vote during elections. In the same year, ARTUZ organized a peaceful march to demand the restoration of salaries to the pre-October 2018 salaries of about \$540 USD.

In the past 12 months the Union handled 132 cases of teachers who were forcibly transferred for being members of the Union. 220 members have been arrested, detained and beaten up by state security forces and are facing trumped up charges at the workplace for their human rights work.

Most recently, in January 2022, 16 teachers who were part of a group of peaceful protestors were beaten, arrested and incarcerated. They were only released on bail on Monday 17 January 2022. The teachers were protesting for a living wage. They were charged with participating in a gathering with intention to cause public violence.

Despite the pushback and targeting of the Union, ARTUZ continues to call for justice. They are now widely recognized and lauded as a key group for labour issues in general.

Artist: Mudiwa Kimberly Marasa
https://www.artstation.com/mudiwa_art

ALL PEOPLE ARE
CREATED EQUAL...

INCENTIVE
SCHEME

10%

...BUT WHEN A POLICY
IS PUT IN PLACE THAT
BENEFITS THOSE IN THE
URBAN, AND ABANDONS
THOSE IN THE RURALS...

IT'S EVIDENT THAT SOME
PEOPLE ARE MORE EQUAL
THAT OTHERS.

RURAL TEACHERS CONVERGED IN GWERU.

Issues Raised



AUG 2009

AT THE HEART OF THE ISSUES WAS THAT
THEY NEEDED AN AUTONOMOUS UNION, AND
SO IT WAS PUT TO A VOTE--

IT WAS UNANIMOUS.



THUS, THE IDEA FOR THE UNION BECAME A REALITY!

THE RURAL TEACHERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE

BUT THAT WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE CONVERSATION, AS IT WAS A CHALLENGE TO CONVINCE THE TEACHER COMMUNITY THAT THEY WERE DIFFERENT.



WHERE PREVIOUS UNIONS OVER PROMISED AND UNDER DELIVERED, THEY ALSO THREW SPANNERS IN ALL NETWORKING ATTEMPTS CLAIMING THAT ARTUZ WAS STATE SPONSORED.

BEGINNING A

7 years debate



BETWEEN TRYING TO CONVINCE TEACHER THEY WERE BRINGING A NEW CULTURE OF TRADE UNIONISM

AND THE STATE RESISTING THE RECOGNITION OF ARTUZ AS A LEGITIMATE UNION...

IT WAS ONLY IN

2016

WHEN THE UNION WAS OFFICIALLY CERTIFIED,



AND MORE TEACHERS. NOT JUST RURAL BEGAN JOINING R.T.U.Z.--

--A TRUE UNION FOR ALL TEACHERS! CALLING FOR A NEW NAME FOR THE:

AMALGAMATION



STARTING A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE A,R.T.U.Z.



THE UNION SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGED THE ABUSE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY, LEARNERS AND TEACHERS IN PURSUIT OF PRIVATE POLITICAL GAINS IN THE MASVINGO HIGH COURT IN 2018.

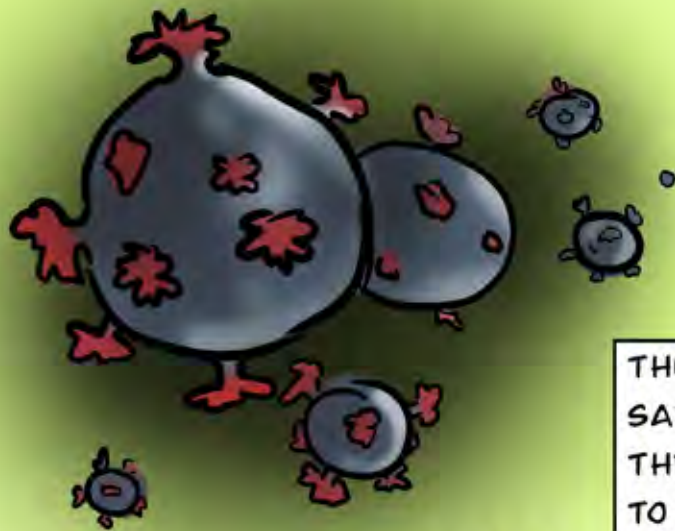
ARTUZ SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED THE RIGHT TO VOTE FOR TEACHERS IN THE JULY 2018 ELECTIONS.

TEACHERS ARE TRADITIONALLY DISPLACED WHEN THEY ARE RECRUITED AS POLLING OFFICIALS BUT IN 2018,

THE UNION SECURED A COURT ORDER COMPELLING THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION TO FACILITATE VOTING FOR TEACHERS.



2020 covid - 19 Pandemic



THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2020 SAW A DEADLY VIRUS SWEEP THROUGH NATIONS FORCING MANY TO TRY ADAPT TO WORKING FROM HOME.

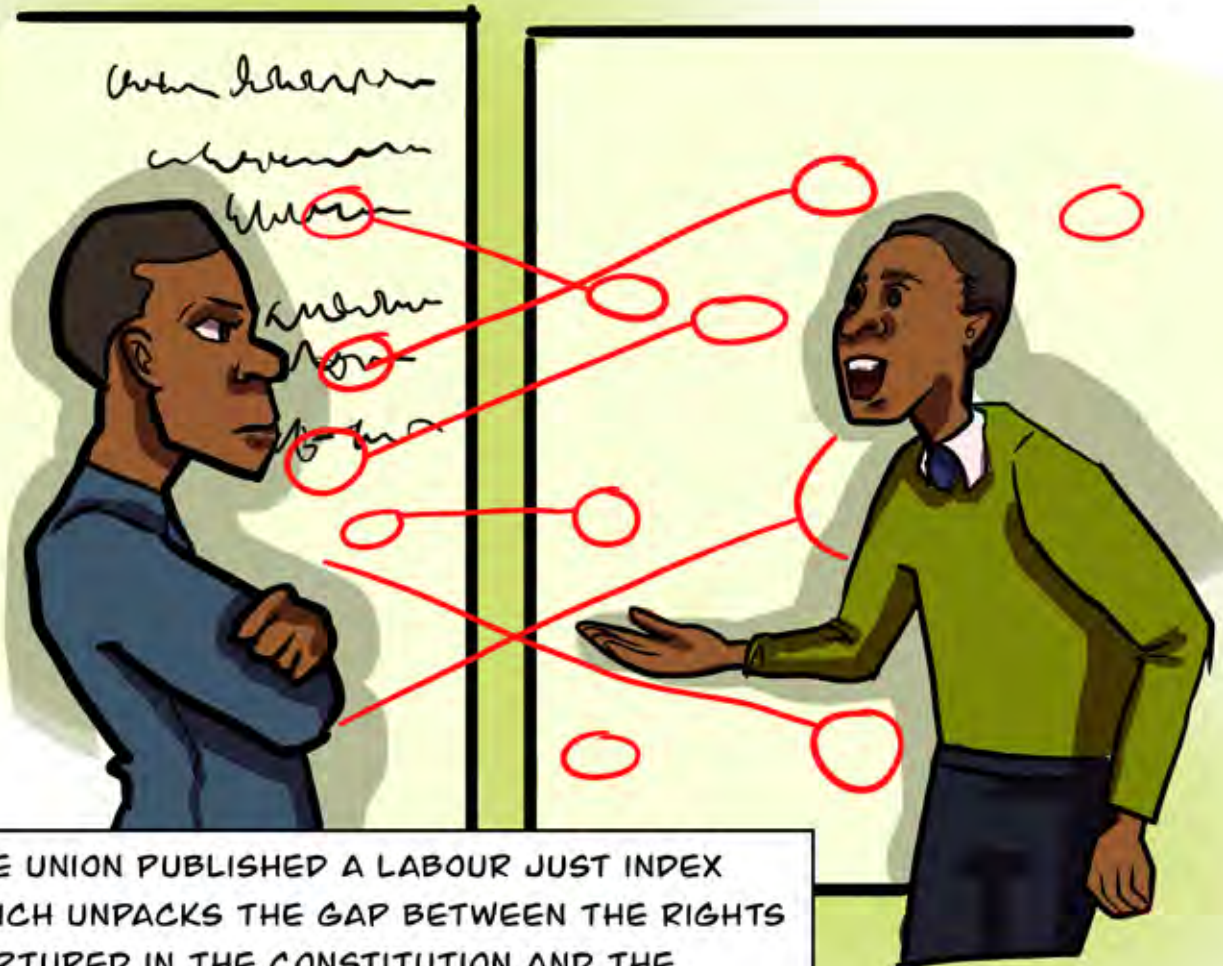
TOOLKIT



THE UNION PRODUCED A REMOTE TEACHING TOOLKIT IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID19. THE TOOLKIT WAS USED TO TRAIN 2450 TEACHERS TO DATE.

THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC--

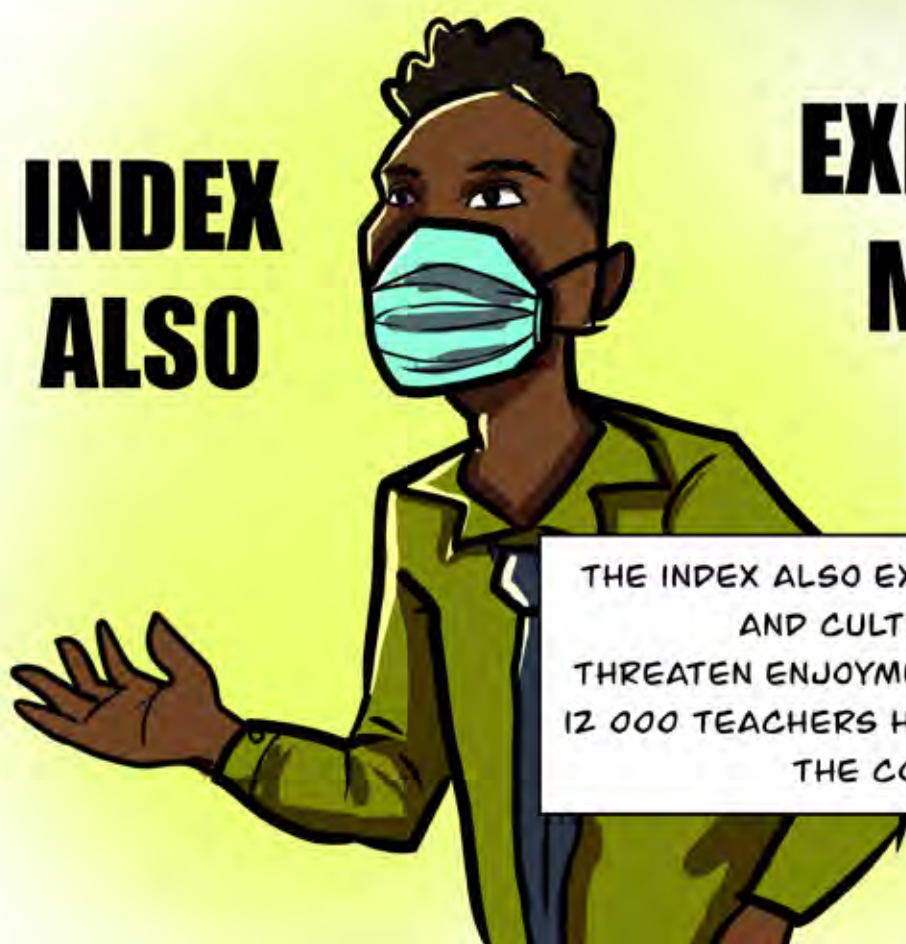
-- A.R.T.U.Z. REMAINED VIGILANT AND VERSATILE IN ITS PRACTICES AND METHODOLOGY.



THE UNION PUBLISHED A LABOUR JUST INDEX WHICH UNPACKS THE GAP BETWEEN THE RIGHTS CAPTURED IN THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT.

**INDEX
ALSO**

**EXPOSES
MORE**



THE INDEX ALSO EXPOSES ADMINISTRATIVE AND CULTURAL PRACTICES WHICH THREATEN ENJOYMENT OF LABOUR RIGHTS. 12 000 TEACHERS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED ON THE CONTENTS OF THE INDEX.



EMERGENCY CHARTER!!

AN EDUCATION IN EMERGENCY CHARTER WAS ALSO PRODUCED AS POLICY PROPOSAL ON HOW TO INSULATE SCHOOLS FROM DISRUPTIONS DURING EMERGENCIES LIKE COVID19.

THE UNION SUCCESSFULLY LOBBIED FOR
THE OUTLAWING OF CORPORAL
PUNISHMENT IN EDUCATION ACT.



AND SUCCESSFULLY PUSHED
FOR PERMITTING PREGNANT
GIRLS IN SCHOOLS.



THE UNION CONTINUES
WORKING IN THE BEST
INTERESTS OF TEACHER
AND STUDENTS TO THIS DAY.

Afghanistan

Liah Jawad Ghazanfar

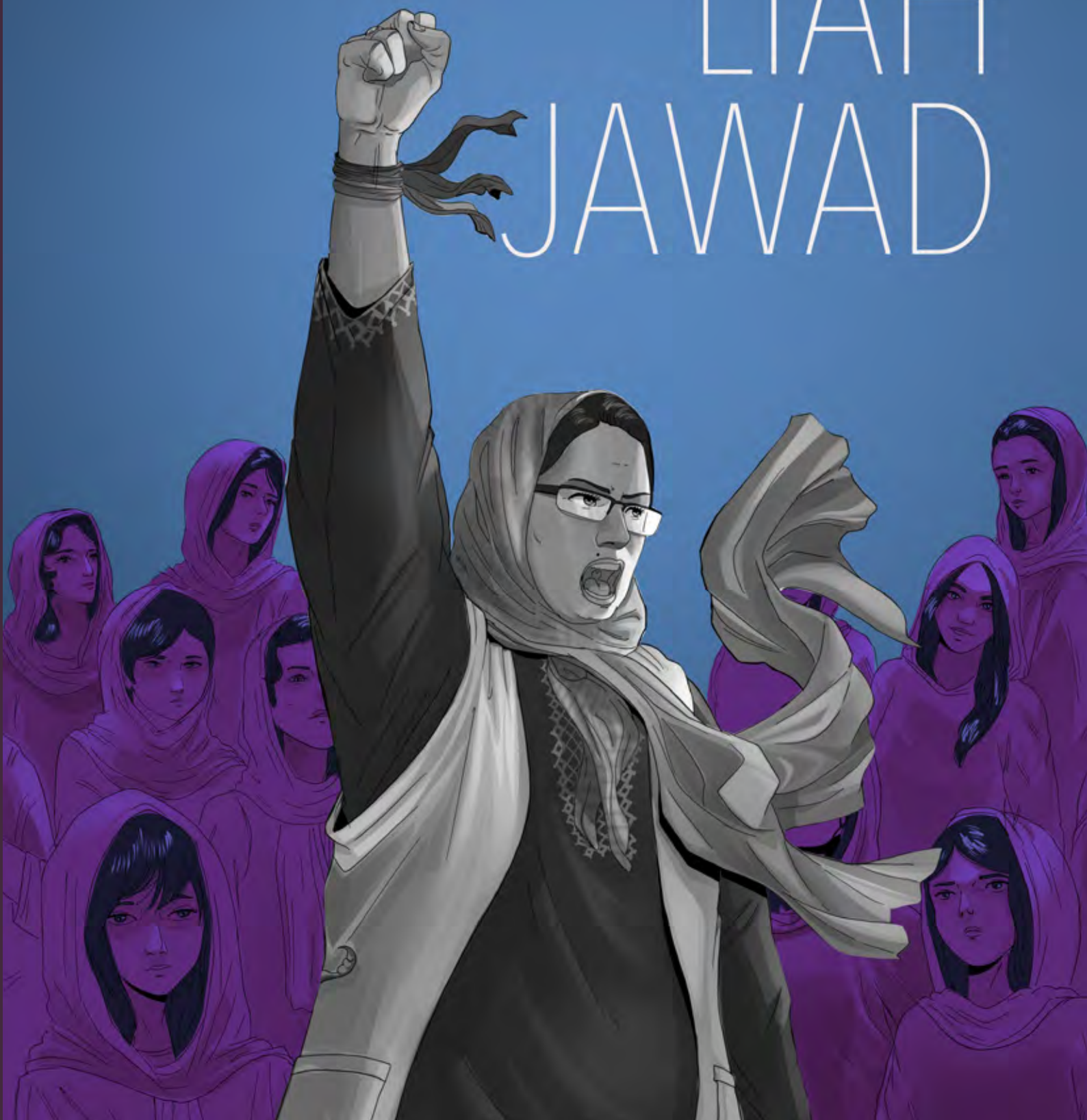
Liah Ghazanfar Jawad is an Afghan woman human rights defender based in Kabul, Afghanistan. Over the past three decades, she has been the Executive Director of Feminine Solidarity for Justice Organization and has advocated for women's rights, raised awareness against sexual harassment in the workplace, forced marriage and child marriage, and provided psychological and medical treatment for victims of torture. She has done pivotal work towards raising the voices of women across Afghanistan for education, peace, and stability in the country.


She was also a member of several human rights committees whose work resulted in the enactment of the Children's Law and laws prohibiting torture, violence against women, and sexual harassment. She worked on projects for access to justice in the prisons for victims of torture, documentation of torture in national prisons, and providing psychotherapy and medical treatment to victims of torture in prisons. She received the Malalai Medal in 2015 from the government of Afghanistan as recognition of her human rights work. She has also participated in many international conferences on human rights, good governance, establishing governance mechanisms in Afghanistan, peace Jirgas, and women empowerment.

In response to her work, she faced many threats against herself and her family. Despite being forced to relocate previously due to threats, she is determined to continue her human rights work after the Taliban takeover in August 2021. Liah is currently in Afghanistan and continues to support women victims of violence and persecution and advocate for their rights and protection. She has provided vital support including services, psychotherapy, and medical treatment for more than 80 displaced and threatened WHRDs, and HRDs, a majority of whom are women.

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GHAZANFAR LIAH JAWAD





Liah Ghazanfar Jawad is an Afghan woman and human rights defender living in Kabul, Afghanistan.

In 1983, because of communist regime atrocities, she was forced to leave the country to Pakistan. Her first job was as a school teacher in 1986; she taught in schools for more than a decade. From 1996-2007, Liah worked with different organizations in the finance and administration fields. In 2007, she became the executive director of the Feminine Solidarity for Justice Organization (FSJO) which was the start of her work for justice.


"Human rights defenders were attacked by all sides to the conflict (government and armed groups), while international community efforts weren't enough to protect HRDs. That was the time that we started our debates, clubs for women/girls rights, workshops on violence against women, forced marriages, inheritance rights, transitional justice. We advocated to bring the perpetrators of warcrimes to justice."



"Afghan women are the main victims in all conflicts. They suffered stress and depression about their uncertain futures and did not know how to get help. That is why we established psycho-social care centres for the victims of torture and victims of domestic abuse."

"Wars and conflict in Afghanistan have destroyed all infrastructure for supporting vulnerable citizens, especially Afghan women. We planned self-sufficiency programs for women and victims of torture. And we trained the police on the fundamental rights of citizens - these were our main achievements."





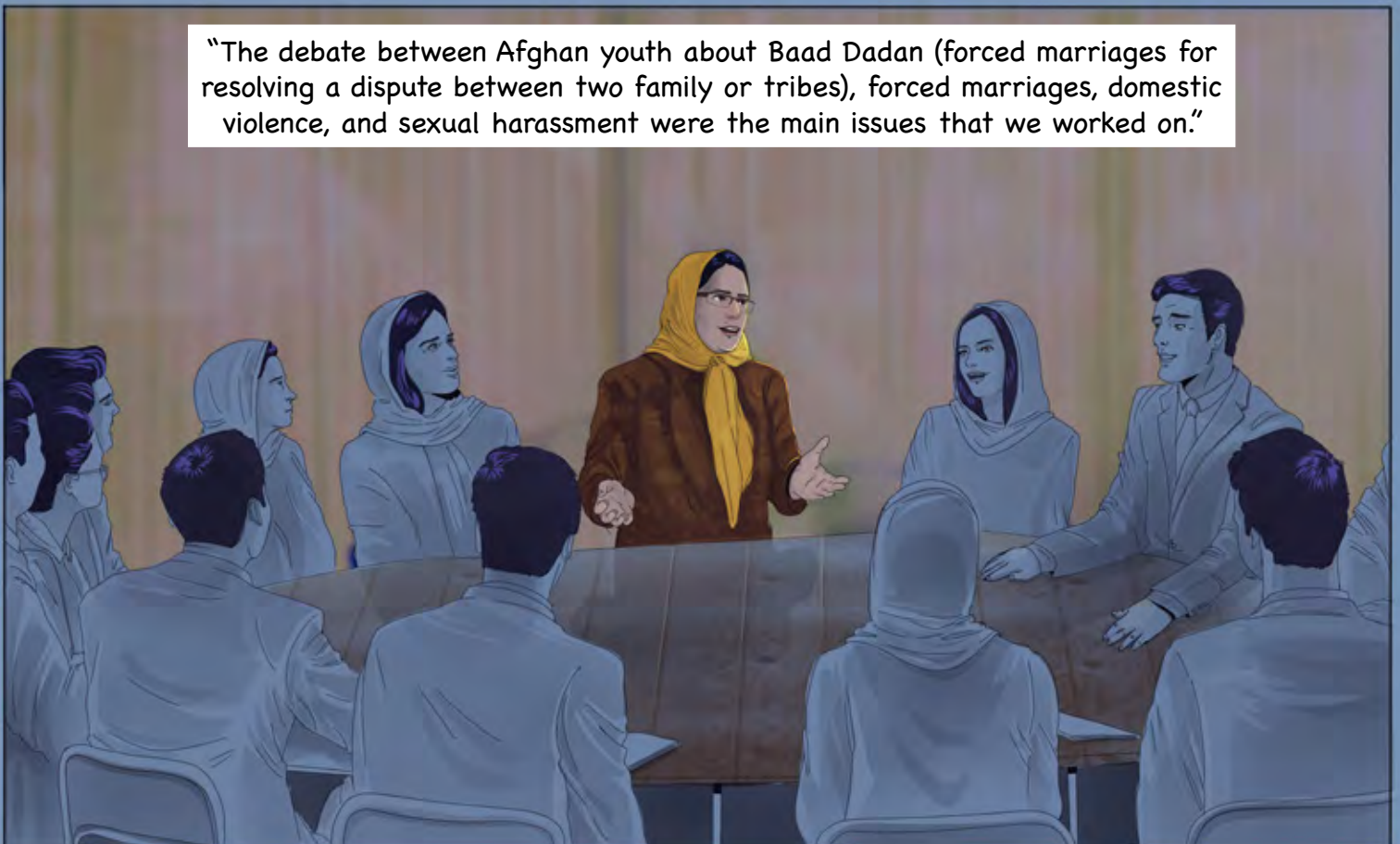
There were a lot of changes in women's rights during the time, but it was not institutionalized. The Afghan Government used women to gain legitimacy and gave them decorative roles, without substance.

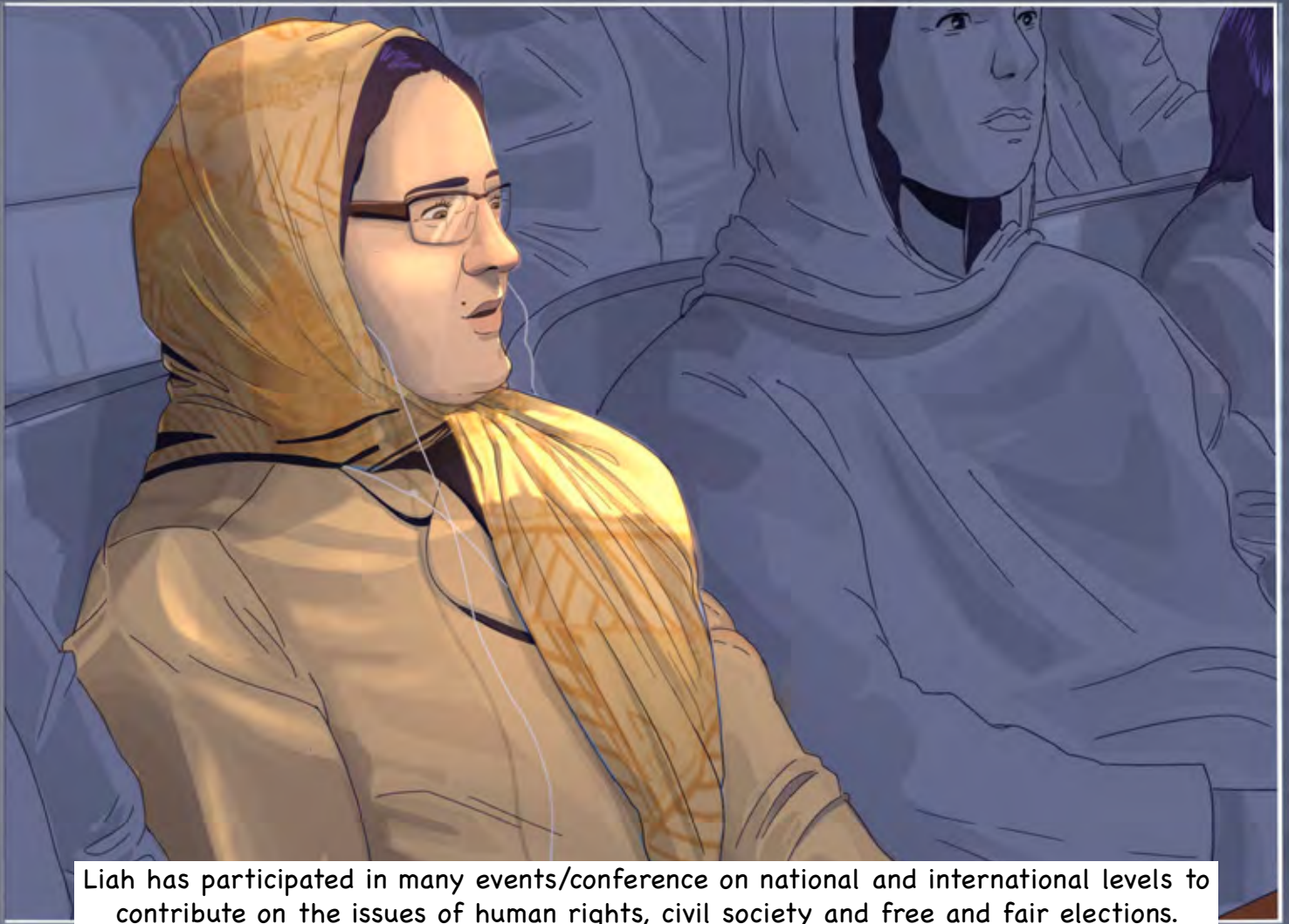
Despite the challenges and risks, Liah never stepped back from her work for women's equality, including advocating for the development of laws and policies such as Eradication of Violence against Women law, anti-torture law, child law, regulating child marriage and violence against child.

Liah was honored with Malai Medal from President Office for her human rights work and defending the rights of war victims.



"The debate between Afghan youth about Baad Dadan (forced marriages for resolving a dispute between two family or tribes), forced marriages, domestic violence, and sexual harassment were the main issues that we worked on."

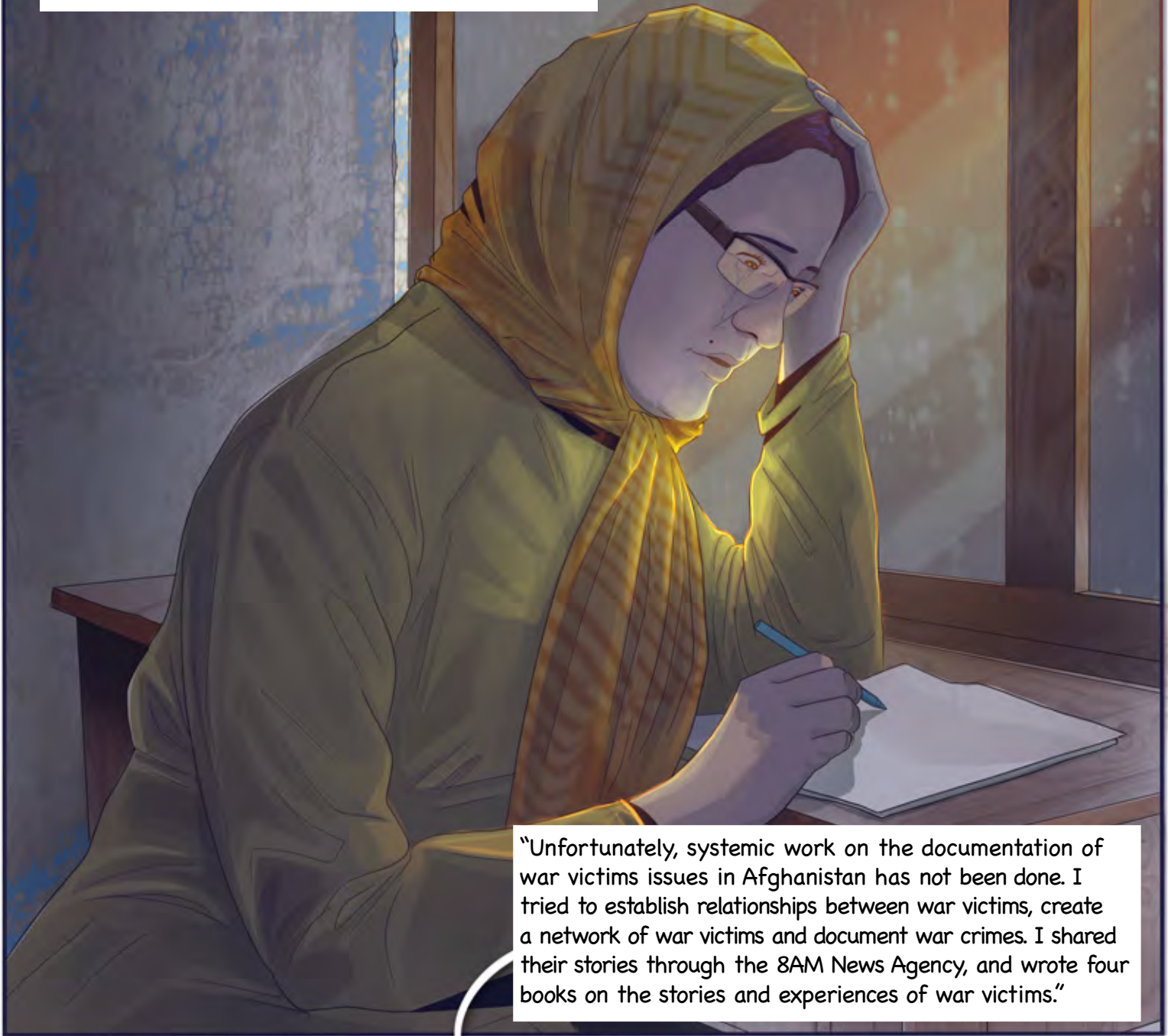




Liah has participated in many events/conference on national and international levels to contribute on the issues of human rights, civil society and free and fair elections.

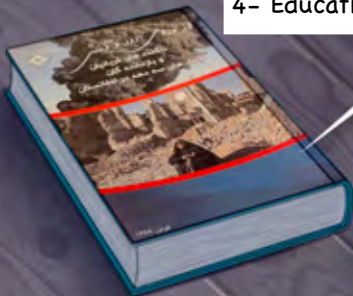


“War victims in Afghanistan make up a considerable part of society. Their voices, concerns and demands were broadcasted through our radio programs in Herat and Takhar.”



“Unfortunately, systemic work on the documentation of war victims issues in Afghanistan has not been done. I tried to establish relationships between war victims, create a network of war victims and document war crimes. I shared their stories through the 8AM News Agency, and wrote four books on the stories and experiences of war victims.”

- 1- Among Smoke and Fire (Untold Stories of War Victims)
- 2- Picture of War Victims of Three Decades of Conflict in Afghanistan
- 3- The Hopes of War Victims through Pictures
- 4- Educational Manual on Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls



Final Word

"I decided to remain in Afghanistan and hope to contribute to the good of my people, especially women. My dream is that Afghan girls will have the opportunity to study and work in all spheres of civil, political, social life and all their rights will be respected. I hope that peace and stability, rule of law and social justice will be realized in Afghanistan. I hope nobody will lose their loved ones in more senseless conflict. I hope the Afghan people will not suffer from discrimination and enjoy equal rights."





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