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Women suffering from 'worst violence in history of modern Iraq'

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Women have been left defenceless and at the mercy of militia groups in the aftermath of the Iraq war in 2003 according to research from the University of Birmingham.

The struggle taking place in Iraq and its impact on women following the dismantling of the state has been investigated by a senior academic in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Birmingham who suggests the war has had detrimental consequences for equality and women's rights.

Dr Haifaa Jawad's paper, 'From liberation to resistance; women in Iraq' examines the involvement of women in the resistance movement, both Islamist and secular, through the eyes and experiences of women present at the scene and subjected to patriarchal and political forces.

Dr Jawad commented:

"The 2003 war on Iraq which aimed among other things, to improve human rights, has had a negative impact on women who are now suffering the worst violence in the history of modern Iraq. The struggle currently taking place in Iraq at the hands of militia groups who have introduced their own laws is having a devastating impact on women."

Dr Jawad will be presenting this research during a one-day conference taking place at the University of Birmingham on Monday 27 June, where specialists from across the country will explore the current discourse between women, Islamism and resistance in the Middle East.

Hosted by the Centre for Islamic Studies, 'Women, Islamism and resistance in the Arab world will incorporate a series of lectures delivered by experts from universities across the country. Key themes set to be explored include feminism in Egypt, the right of Palestinian women to resist and Islamic doctrine and praxis in the contemporary world.

Dr Jawad explained:

"The relationship between women and Islamism in the Arab world is very complicated. The emergence of Islamism in recent decades calls into question women's rights. Some claim that Islamism has the ability to empower women and allow them to play a broad public role, but whether this is actually occurring will be explored by a group of respected specialists during this one-day event."

Experts from the University of Birmingham and the Universities of Cambridge, Lancaster and Westminster will be discussing and debating the current discourse between women, Islamism and female forms of resistance in the Arab world. Highlights will include University of Birmingham Research Fellow Dr Laura McDonald's exploration of Islamist Women in the Middle East and the implications they have on Muslim women's activisms in the West and PhD researcher Elisabeth Buergener's discussion on the post-Islamist revivalism, Syrian women and the Da'wa movement.

'Women, Islamism and Resistance in the Arab World' is taking place at the European Research Institute Building, Room G51 at the University of Birmingham on Monday 27 June at 11am. The one-day event is open to the public and registration costs are £10 (with buffet lunch) or £5 (without lunch). The deadline for registration is Monday 20 June.

For attendance and registration enquiries, please contact Dr Helen Ingram, Department of Philosophy, Theology and Religion via 0121 415 8332 or **h.ingram@bham.ac.uk (mailto:h.ingram@bham.ac.uk)**. For other enquiries, please contact the conference organiser Dr Haifaa Jawad at 0121 415 8337 or **h.a.jawad@bham.ac.uk (mailto:h.a.jawad@bham.ac.uk)**.

Notes to Editors

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