

# **LEGAL BRIEF**

## **Relating Women to Their Abusers as a Crime Against Humanity**

### **I. Issue Presented**

Whether the systematic practice of relating women to their abusers through legal cultural or institutional mechanisms constitutes a crime against humanity under international law.

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### **II. Summary of Argument**

Relating women to their abusers through compelled association, legal dependency, social obligation, or moral duty constitutes an inhumane act when carried out in a widespread or systematic manner. This practice results in the denial of personhood, the infliction of severe mental suffering, gender based persecution, and the obstruction of justice. When enabled by a community, or enforced by state or institutional actors it meets the legal elements required for crimes against humanity.

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### **III. Relevant Legal Framework**

International criminal law defines crimes against humanity as certain acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population with knowledge of the attack. Acts recognized within this framework include inhumane treatment, torture, persecution, and severe deprivation of fundamental rights.

Mental suffering, psychological coercion, and enforced dependency are recognized forms of harm when they reach sufficient severity duration and scale. Gender based persecution constitutes a protected category when fundamental rights are denied on the basis of sex.

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### **IV. Statement of Facts and Patterns**

Across multiple jurisdictions women are routinely required to remain legally, socially or psychologically connected to individuals who have inflicted abuse. This occurs through family, court mandates, custody arrangements, cultural doctrines, economic dependency, structures and institutional minimization of harm.

These practices expose women to continued fear, retraumatization, loss of autonomy and denial of safety. The harm persists over time and affects large civilian populations. The conduct is predictable, foreseeable and preventable.

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## **V. Legal Analysis**

### **A. Denial of Personhood and Agency**

Relating women to their abusers treats women as extensions of another individual rather than autonomous rights holders. This deprives women of independent legal standing, bodily autonomy, and self determination. Such deprivation constitutes an inhumane act under international law.

### **B. Psychological Torture and Severe Mental Suffering**

Compelled association with an abuser results in chronic psychological harm including fear, hypervigilance, neurological injury, and long term health consequences. International law recognizes severe mental suffering as torture when inflicted intentionally or with knowledge of its effects.

### **C. Gender Based Persecution**

The expectation that women endure abuse maintain contact, rehabilitate perpetrators or sacrifice safety is imposed on the basis of sex. This results in the severe deprivation of rights including security, dignity and freedom of movement. Such conduct satisfies the legal definition of persecution.

### **D. Widespread and Systematic Character**

The repetition of these practices across courts institutions and cultures demonstrates a systematic pattern. The scale of affected women establishes a widespread attack against a civilian population. The conduct operates through policy practice and normalized enforcement.

### **E. State and Institutional Responsibility**

When courts agencies or social systems mandate or enable continued exposure to abusers they participate in the harm. Knowledge of the consequences establishes responsibility through direct action acquiescence or failure to protect.

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## **VI. Obstruction of Justice and Impunity**

Relating women to their abusers frequently includes discrediting testimony, minimizing harm and prioritizing offender interests. This obstructs access to justice and creates conditions of impunity. International law recognizes such obstruction as an enabling factor in crimes against humanity.

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## **VII. Conclusion**

The systematic practice of relating women to their abusers constitutes an inhumane act involving psychological torture, gender based persecution and severe deprivation of fundamental rights. When carried out on a widespread or systematic basis with institutional knowledge it meets the legal threshold for crimes against humanity.