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Feminist Collective Kores Xapolytes
Two years after the victims were found
Text by feminist group about the handling of the femicide cases
by the state and the police
2021

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This leaflet was written by the Cypriot Feminist Collective Kores Xapolytes in June of 2021 and was distributed at a protest outside the Cypriot Attorney General's office that took place on the 18th of June, in Nicosia.

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The police, the army, the law office of the republic, the ministries – we consider all of these to comprise the web of patriarchal structures which govern our female bodies in more ways than one. Two years after the "shocking" revelations about the "first serial killer" in Cyprus, not only nothing has changed in the working conditions of migrant women with the status of domestic workers and other statuses, i.e. that of the 'seasonal worker', but the institutions themselves are essentially applauding the criminal negligence of the police, which was clearly motivated by racist and sexist perceptions, sending the clear message that the entire state machinery reproduces and tolerates gender-based and racist violence. The migration policy of the government and the normalised, de-facto partition of the island, the black hole - alibi of the Republic of Cyprus, are some of the tools used by the guilty: Nouris tells us that they come from the 'other side' in order to alter our demographic structure, and the front-line police officers, who chose not

to investigate the complaints tell us that they leave and cross over to the other side when they "disappear".

We accuse the attorney general's office. Last May, instructions were given for the criminal prosecution of 15 policemen who handled the complaints about the disappearance of the 7 women and girls, a fact which offered hope that after the intense social outcry, the bodies of the murdered women weren't so invisible to the eyes of the Cypriot judicial system. However, the decision of the current Attorney General not to proceed with the prosecutions against the police officers regarding their omission in exercising their operational duties doesn't surprise us and definitely doesn't shock us. It seems like he decided to close the case, shut it in the drawers of his repulsive office, declaring as innocent every accomplice, giving the green light for further criminal negligence, rewarding every cop who ignored the complaints, depriving essential justice for the murdered women and their families.

We accuse the police. Let us remind you that, despite the fact that the disappearances had been repeatedly reported from the families and friends of the murdered women, and the police had had enough evidence to link the military man to the disappearances (a fact proven by the ease with which he was connected to the accidental discovery by passers by of the body of Mary Rose), members of the police simply decided that the victims "left, escaped to the occupied territories", and the matter ended there. We do not forget that there are still women missing - most of them immigrants, without anyone looking for them. We would also like to remind you that the police managed to hide its criminal complicity behind the glorification of the "excellent" investigative work of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which was presented to the public to have solved this difficult puzzle successfully, regardless of the fact that it was the murderer himself who admitted to all 7 murders, at the precise moment he chose to, and depsite the fact that all but one of the corpses were discovered only because of his instructions! The police body stimulates in us neither confidence nor

security. On the contrary, it is an organic part of the problem. In fact, a CID officer publicly stated that the investigators were "taking a secret with them". Police officers, therefore, work together with killers of women to prevent the truth from coming to the surface…

We accuse the media. At the time, the media was obsessed with the "shocking" revelations and with the psychological profile of the killer, blatantly avoiding the deep-rooted circumstances that allowed him to kill undisturbed. The media made no reference to misogyny, sexism or racism, nor to the importance of the working conditions of migrant women. As a result, the relevance of these factors was not taken into account in the public debate, as their main concern was to "close" this painful for the Cypriot society case and to bury the suitcases of (co)guilt in the drawers of impunity.Besıdes, the same thing happened in the case of the British woman in Ayia Napa, as it happens in most cases of rape and sexual violence. We also do not forget that in his statements to the media, Anastasiades, after the revelations of the murders, brazenly and opportunistically turned the social outcry that erupted into a partisan conflict, announcing that "at least" the government (his goverment that is) "dared to apologize even though the victims were foreigners"!

Therefore, to us, it is not just a psychopathic man that killed Mary Rose, Arian, Sierra, Livia Florentina, Maricar, Elena Natalia and Asmita Khadka. It is the state itself. The hands of the military officer were charged by the rotten misogynistic institutions of the republic of cyprus, which reproduce sexism and racism, which translate into criminal inaction, constituting the institutions themselves as accomplices of the femicide killer. The murderous exercise of power upon the vulnerable bodies of migrant women became possible because of the systemic invisibility which is intensified through the intersecting inequalities carried by their identity as female migrant domestic workers - as subjects living in the margins of cypriot society, experiencing systemic violence on a daily ba-

sis. Their isolation due to systemic obstacles, their socio-economic dependence on people and institutions that do not hesitate to exercise power upon them, the lack of trust towards institutions and networks which are supposed to safeguard their protection, the nonexistent legal representation, are just few of the factors which indicate how femicides are part of a wider patriarchal system designed to terrorize women, to maintain the privileges carried by the performative function of the male gender. The victims of the officer were not unfortunate and faceless beings. It is not by chance that they were women. It is not randomly that they were migrants. It is not randomly that they lived under a permanent state of insecurity.

Let the cases be closed, let them be forgotten, let's not get out of our comfort zone, let's not upset the public opinion. Let's pretend that there are no connections between social class, gender and racial identity. Who wants to talk about intersectionality anyway, they're analysing the killer's psyche in order to keep us focusing on personal responsibility: the woman who reported rape was crazy, he was just a psychopath isolated from wider society, an outlier, she was a migrant, she came to take our money and leave, what are you stirring things up for again? The murderer is in prison, what else are you demanding?

We wouldn't have been silenced even if all of the guilty parties for the crimes against the 7 women and girls, and as we discussed earlier they are many, were convicted. We certainly won't be quiet when after such horrific incidents, even those directly involved are flagrantly shielded from responsibility.

You can't wash the blood off your hands anymore. You're swimming in red lakes of complicity and murderous negligence. You stink of sexism and racism.

But we look you in the eye, we are a swarm that surrounds you and we demand justice for the murdered women. We demand that the case be reopened. From now on you'll find us in your way.

Not one woman less.

-Feminist Collective "Kores Xapolytes"