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# Early and Forced Marriage

These two types of marriages are at the origin of many problems in human society. The fact that parents give much importance to the cost of dowry has negative impacts on marriage.

It is important to be conscious about the feeling of others and the responsibility of everybody. Some groups of people have made forced marriage a special custom and it becomes their symbol. These kinds of marriages are spreading in all families, as during the time of their ancestors. It is true that it appears important to be responsible of one’s family but it is also important to listen to the advice of others.

The majority of refugees in Ouré Cassoni are unaware about the consequences of forced marriage. According to an agency which works for women’s rights in the Ouré Cassoni camp, the camp is going to be closed because of the forced marriage phenomena.

We agree that the marriage is a principle of our religion, Islam. The father has the right to give his daughter to someone he chooses himself but he must not do so in the ancestral way: to enhance the familial social relations or to make money.

The familial, social relations and poverty are issues which are at the origin of many underlying problems in the camp, among which are: psychological problems, isolation of the society, and the preference of death and suicide to life.

Marriage according to the choice of the parents without consulting the daughter always has negative sides and ends by divorce. First of all, the daughter will hate her husband all lifelong because she doesn’t love him. If she finds afterward someone else who looks like her previous husband she will not be able to experience desire for him. Sometime she becomes crazy and then she misses her education and will become illiterate.

The forced marriage proves the lack of respect for women’s rights. According to the human rights associations, the lack women’s freedom causes hatred and the disputes within the society.

According to the testimony of refugees, forced marriage is reduced because of the sensitization made by the sensitization community [the NGOs]. As people understood the consequences of forced marriage, there are now only 3% of forced marriage cases in the refugee camp.

We know that forced marriage is often the result of poverty and of expectations for the familial and social relations.

In this later case, we can see in this type of marriage some good: the husband will not mistreat the woman and her children for they are part of his family.

On contrary it is bad, if the marriage is driven by the fear of poverty: in this case there’ll be no love for one another and the woman risks to be treated as a good that the man has acquired thanks to his money, but not like a human being.

Dialogue:

* As a father, did you really agree to the goods that God gave you? Where and how did you acquire your son and daughter?
* Oh father! I live in a hell, it is not easy. I desire to live at ease and rejoice as in my infancy.
* Under the oppressive sunny warmth, I only have a blanket which does not overtake one meter.
* Please, try to visit Fatouma, Leila and Affaf at Anaus Paradise**.**
* Bad life, and it was like the life of our ancestors.
* Woe betides you my daughter if you refuse to marry this man.

**Do You Know What We Call “Early Marriage”?**

**Authors**: Hamid Harran of Abbas village, and Aziza Abdel Karim Arbam of Ouré Cassoni refugee camp.

Many people do not distinguish between early marriage and a wedding. But the inhabitants of Ouré Cassonirefugee camp know very well what the difference is.

According to some people’s testimonies among the refugees, the marriage is when the man’s family goes to the woman’s home to beg the hand of the daughter. Usually the marriage is celebrated at the house of the daughter’s parents.

According to the traditions and customs in the refugee camp, all marriage must compulsorily respect the two stages:

1. Begging the hand of the daughter (for marriage) and
2. The wedding

Both stages are frequent at the refugee camp.

The second stage has lots of consequences on the girls who are not physically mature: consequences on the reproduction and the girl cannot be responsible of her rights and duties at home. She does not respect her husband’s decisions because she is not yet ready for responsibility and when she will have babies she will neither be able to educate them, nor to look after their health.

Now, we understand the difference between marriage and wedding. This allows us to acknowledge the negative and positive effects of early marriages.

According to the wise people, early marriage has lots of advantages for the society. It helps to reduce the sexual vagrancy and it protects also against sexually transmitted diseases and it is also a means of reconciliation between the ethnic groups.

# The Relationship between Men, Women and Children in the Refugee Camp

Men, women and children in the refugee camp live a good and perfect relationship in all aspects of their daily life. They experience a true solidarity, in times of happiness as well as in times of misfortune, in the social, cultural, sportive and religious domains.

There is also a fraternal relationship during the celebration of special occasions: for instance, during the celebration of Sudanese Independence Day, weddings, the Celebration of Prophet Mohammed’s birthday, Women’s International Day, the International Day of the Child and ‘Arbor Day’.

Men and women live in a favorable and positive relationship in all domains: in education, health, for the sensitization to eradicate violence against women or other issues in the society.

Also, I thank all the NGO working in the refugee camps for their efforts to instruct all people – men, women and children.

# Violence against Children

Many societies refuse violence, as it’s a bad behavior which is often used against the rights of certain members of the family.

That is why the international community works by doing sensitizations in order to eradicate all types of violence: violence against women and violence against children.

At the beginning, there was much violence in the refugee camp. But nowadays the results show that the violence has been reduced thanks to the sensitizations made by NGOs working more specifically with the help of young people and religious people in the camp. Rare are the cases of violence against women and children.

My thanks finally go towards every NGO working in Ouré Cassoni refugee camp for their engagement in the field of education – for in a well instructed society there is no inhuman behavior.

# Why is This Refugee Camp Called “Ouré Cassoni”?

Ouré Cassoni is a word, in Zaghawa dialect, which means “feeble stream”. It is made up of “Ouré” which means “river” or “stream” and “Cassoni” which means “feeble” – or something which does not have force.

This camp is named Ouré Cassoni because it was founded in the region of the river Ouré Cassoni, in the southeast area of the camp. It is a river which takes its source at Bardany and joins the river Wali Hawar in the Kariyare region.

This is the reason why people still call this new camp by the name of the old settlement in this region.

The name Ouré Cassoni is recognized by the Chadian administrative authorities, the eastern population of Chad, the North-West area of Darfur and the humanitarian community as the frontier region between Chad and Sudan.

Ouré Cassoni Camp is known at the local, regional and international levels. Its name is never to be changed.

# Commercial Activities in the Refugee Camp

One might ask if there are commercial activities on a daily basis in the refugee camp.

We can see that refugee camp market regroups daily for a variety of commercial actions organized by the refugees themselves.

Some people, among the refugees, cultivate vegetables like okra, onions, tomatoes and so on in order to sell these at the market and thus to have the necessary money to pay for their housing.

We can see also that the CFA Franc is in use in the camp because it is used in Chad and because the refugees’ customers are sometimes Chadians coming from different regions of Chad.

The investigations which have been made a few days ago [when the camp was closed down] also show that the market in Ouré Cassoni also presents other products alongside the products grown by the refugees.

**Disputes Related to the Dislodgement of the Refugee Camp**

The concerns over the dislodgement [moving the camp to a different location] of Ouré Cassoni include:

1. NGOs cannot rebuild what is necessary for the refugee camp: for instance, the construction of school centres, hospitals, warehouses and roads.
2. Refugees do not have the possibility of rebuilding their houses in another camp, especially the old men and the orphans.
3. There is insufficiency of drinking water in the proposed new locations.
4. The lack of school documentation will be a handicap for education, and education is one of the most important goals to be attained. According to the Prophet, education is a duty for all the human beings.
5. Destabilization of human and brotherly relationships. Good actions and reciprocal help between refugees are rules which govern the social life.
6. Many Muslims find themselves diverted from their Islamic civilization, which shows how far they are from their religion.
7. The lack of security
8. Disputes over things which are not important, misunderstanding in the camps and the diversion of Muslims from their religion, which causes people to become lazy.

You must know that even if there are other causes on the dislodgement issue, the main cause is the involvement of different parties in the refugee camp’s affairs.

# Does Freedom Reign in the Refugee Camp?

There is freedom because all the humanitarian associations work freely in the camps and in all the fields of social life: in the education, social and cultural fields. So, we thank God for the humanitarian associations who always support us in the social affairs.

But the liberty is not complete for the refugees.

Some refugees cannot go out of the camp and sometimes we are condemned to stay in the camp. One can go out to fetch wood or grass but he does not know if he will be able come back home. We really endure psychological suffering.

We have a general loss of confidence because of all the problems that we have from the outside. Sometimes, they [the local population in Chad] burn trees, rape women and even wound people, who finally die.

How can we talk about liberty in the camp when there are still assaults with guns and knives to kill people and take their goods?

How was freedom in the Muslim society? Liberty in Islam is a fundamental principle, among the first principles of any Muslim’s individual life. Everyone is free to do what he desires, provided that he does not threaten the lives of others and their freedom. Islam insures the freedom of religion as well as other freedoms which are not known by the Occidental community. The freedom of human rights, the freedom of refugees, and the freedom of accommodation. Islam acknowledges also the freedom of labour for life and food. It acknowledges also the freedom of self defence as previewed by the law.

When will freedom be secured? There will be freedom when there will be sufficient security within and outside the camp, because now we are influenced by many serious problems.

We want real security which may protect us against the risks outlined here. Refugees cannot go far from the camp because of the insecurity. So, for them to have the freedom of travelling wherever they want, we wish the security to be reinforced so that they can freely move and organize their activities.

# The Lack of Secondary Schools in Ouré Cassoni

We, young people of the camp, face many difficulties regarding secondary school education.

First, there is the lack of school furniture, the lack of books and the lack of professional teachers to prepare exams for secondary school diplomas.

Otherwise, parents of secondary school level students have willingness: they are more interested in the studies of their children than they are of those at the primary school.

Only one class has been opened by an association but the other classes have not yet opened because the association is not interested in secondary school education. And only one classroom is not sufficient for secondary school education, because all the students have the ambition to continue their trainings.

So, in case there is no education, they cannot achieve their wishes. Because of the lack of secondary school education in this region, or nearby, young people do not get the possibility to pursue university education in Sudan; this stops the ambition of high education and does not promote the youth’s prospects.

This may be considered as one of the causes which directs young people to wrong thoughts and to withdraw from their family. For it is at this age that they can learn many good things other than staying and following traditional education which presents fewer advantages for their future.

Sometimes they will be integrated in the army or will go abroad in a neighbouring country, or in Europe, hoping to be at ease and achieve their youth dreams and returning to their parents after making money and with a good memory.

But sometimes they do not succeed and decide to stay in a different country forever. Some of them become traders, others shepherds, as consequences of the lack of high school education. Whoever studies but did not accomplish his training shall regret it his whole life long. For this reason, students in Ouré Cassoni require from the NGOs to open the secondary school classrooms allowing them to follow their training.

This is for the individual and general interests: they may insure their future and the coming time of their country for the reign of stability, tranquillity and optimism.

# Sudanese Refugees in Chad

A refugee is someone who left his country or who escaped from a region for political, religious, or racial issues or to escape a plague, and who withdraws and stays somewhere else in order to have security or tranquillity.

This is always due to wars, natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, and inter-army and inter-community conflicts.

In Sudan, we live the stability and the security until problems started between the Government and an armed group. The population of Darfur is influenced by war, murder, and the robbery of goods.

The region is destabilized and there is no more security. This is why we took refuge in Chad, a brotherly and neighbouring country, a stable and calm country.

We arrived at Bahai and at Ouré Cassoni. There we found security and stability and until now our feelings are not natural and we are not at ease because we miss our country.

Finally, I thank all the NGOs and the Chadian Government for their sustainable efforts.

# The Participation of Young People in Ouré Cassoni

Young people must participate in all the activities of the camp: in the commercial, social and cultural activities and particularly in the field of sport.

Young people are worried about the insufficiency of those activities.

For instance in the field of sport, they play football and volley ball. They organize trainings and tournaments in the camp. Those who learned English at the beginner level participate in the commercial competitions.

The situation of the young people in Ouré Cassoni is really serious. Many live in a hard way and this may be the origin of the great part of disorders in the camp.

The new association of young journalists of the camp Ouré Cassoni has for subject: the young people at the market and Al Bashir and the current power. Such kinds of associations can help people to reduce their suffering, which is due to injustice, revolt, disorder and inequality. For a real national reconciliation, there must be justice and equality.

The youth’s role is not only eating, drinking and playing football.

Even books are insufficient in the refugee camp. When the student arrives at level six in the primary school, he cannot continue his remaining classes because situation in the camp does not allow him to continue.

In fact the associations [NGOs] have decided only to help people to survive and protect their lives.