

A woman with dark, wavy hair is seated at a desk in a dimly lit room. She is wearing a white blouse with a dark tie. The room has a warm, reddish-pink hue. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a chair and some papers on the desk.

# I Want a Solution

An Egyptian Feature Film by Saeed Marzouk

Produced in 1975

# Research and writing by Rasha Azab

This study was carried out in cooperation with



In partnership with



With the support of





In 1973, writer Hosn Shah published a story about a woman of social standing struggling to obtain a divorce despite being separated from her husband. She spent years in court failing because of the flawed laws supporting the husband and granting him the power to maltreat his wife.

At the same time, writer and feminist pioneer Amina Al Said - the first Egyptian editor-in-chief - published a similar story: a story about a woman from a financially challenged background who has served her family for decades and finds herself deprived of her most basic rights because her husband married another woman. Since the law does not protect women in such cases, the sixty-year-old housewife had no choice but to look for a job.

Mrs. Jihan El-Sadat, the late president's wife, was keen to associate her image with successful women in various professional fields. In a meeting with Aisha Rateb, the first Egyptian embassadress, Amina Al Said, and artist Faten Hamama, they discussed the urgency of changing the personal status law and the necessity to create a film conveying these women's stories to society.

Faten Hamama took the lead and asked her friend Hosn Shah to dig further into the story. She also used the one published by Amina Al-Said, which became the core of 'I want a Solution' 's script, whose story revolves around the struggles of three women.

Despite the quasi-official support for this film, it could not land production or funding as quickly as expected. The filmmakers had to convert the stories into televised episodes to facilitate the production process through governmental television channels. Director Saeed Marzouk was appointed to direct the television episodes. At the time, he was a young filmmaker who had presented two films of impressive artistic stances. In his opinion, the stories were powerful and needed to be treated in a film.

The preparations for the film took off with daily visits the director made to the courts for three months, during which he monitored the diaries of women facing divorce cases that sometimes went on for years without reaching any conclusions. From there, the film's journey began.

## Position in the Egyptian film industry

- The country was recovering from a major war with the Israeli occupation that lasted six years. Everything had changed, and Egyptian cinema was bewildered. Entertainment cinema spread in an attempt to mitigate the impact of war.
- In 1975, the year of the film production, Egyptians started benefiting again from free markets and imported goods after years of siege and austerity. Port Said became a center for new trade, brokerage, and quick profit spread, as Al Shwarby Street became a focal point of consumption and smuggled goods.
- The nationalization of the film industry lasted for eight years, during which the state-controlled film production, theaters, and studios. That era ended with failure, and private production companies reappeared. Many artists who resorted to working in Lebanon returned to Egypt, and the production bloomed in diversity after the siege, releasing more than 400 films in the seventies.
- This year, Egyptian cinema theaters screened several influential films around political issues. Films like: 'Al-Karnak' by Ali Badrakhan, 'Whom Should We Shoot?' by Kamal El-Sheikh, rescreening of 'The Dawn Visitor', banned in 1973, and the blatant social film 'I want a Solution' caused a public and critical stir.
- In a simple reading of the movie box office numbers that year, the public appreciated films that discussed thorny political and social issues. It was a clear indication of the change in the general mood of viewers at the time, which helped the emergence of politically and socially engaged films after years of cautious involvement with reality.

# درية عزمى.. بطللة أريد حلا... هل أحيلت للتقاعد؟!

هل أحيل فيلم «أريد حلا» بعد صدور قانون الاجراءات فى مسائل الأحوال الشخصية الجديد.. إلى المعاش؟

ترى .. هل أفرح فى مثل هذه الحالة أم أحزن لأن موضوع الفيلم الذى ارتبط اسمى باسمه والذى هو قطعة منى يمكن أن يصبح من التراث؟ ففى حالة الفرح.. سوف يكون السبب أن الفيلم قد حقق الهدف الاجتماعى والقانونى الذى كتب من أجله وأن بطلات الفيلم درية عزمى «فانت حماسة» وسنية مهران «رجاء حسين» وحيياة البرانى «أمينة رزق» وعشرات الألفوف إن لم يكن الملايين من أمثالهن ممن ترددت أو مازلن يترددن على محاكم الأحوال الشخصية يمكن أن يجدن حلا.. أو هكذا نأمل بعد صدور القانون الجديد.

أما الحزن.. وهو حزن درامى لا علاقة له بأرض الواقع - فلأن القصة التى كتبها فى عام ١٩٧٣ والتي عرضت لأول مرة عام ١٩٧٤ بعد أن قامت ببطولتها سيدة الشاشة العربية فانت حماسة أمام رشى أباطة فى السينما المصرية الذى لن يتكرر.. يمكن أن تصبح من التراث بعد أن ظلت أحداثها مدة ستة وعشرين عاما حية تشع حيوية.. وبعد أن تحولت شخصية كل بطللة من بطلاتها إلى رمز لنموذج من المعاناة التى عرفتها

نساء مصر منذ صدر القانون ٢٥ لسنة ١٩٢٩ الذى كان سوط عذاب على المرأة المصرية التى تعرف الطريق إلى محاكم الأحوال الشخصية، لقد ظلت قصص معاناة بطلات الفيلم تثير دموع النساء فى مصر والدول العربية ويرين فيها تعبيراً عن مأساياهن كلما عرض الفيلم فى التلفزيون المصرى أو القنوات الفضائية العربية.. كما ظلت هذه القصص تثير عطف الرجال المستنيرين وتثقل على ضمائرهم عندما يرون الأمهات والشقيقات والبنات يتعذبن كل هذا العذاب وهن يدرن فى دائرة القانون الجهنمية من محامين وكتبة محاكم وجلسات تمتد أحيانا لأكثر من عشر سنوات بحيث تبتلع المال والجهد والاعصاب وأيام الشباب التى تضيع هباء..

وقد استمر فيلم «أريد حلا» عنوانا على مشاكل المرأة المصرية حتى أن اللجنة العليا للمهرجانات السينمائية برئاسة الدكتور فوزى فهمى مدير أكاديمية الفنون لم تجد بعد واحد وعشرين عاما من عرضه فيلما آخر غيره لكى يمثل السينما المصرية فى مؤتمر المرأة العالمى الذى عقد فى بكين بالصين عام ١٩٩٥، وكان المؤتمر قد أقام ضمن فعالياته أسبوعا لأفلام المرأة التى جاءت من كل أرجاء العالم لكى تعرض كل دولة فيلما يعبر عن قضية من قضايا المرأة فى بلدها

وقد سافرت أيامها فى صحبة الفيلم إلى بكين وعرض الفيلم على السينمائيات القادمات من القارات الخمس.. كما عرضت عشرات الأفلام الأخرى.. وقد تبين بعد مشاهدتى لكل الأفلام الأجنبية أن مأساة المرأة المصرية فى مواجهة القانون هى مأساة لانظير لها فى أى مكان فى العالم.

لقد ظلت أحلم دائما بتغيير مواد القانون رقم ٢٥ لسنة ١٩٢٩ - منذ كنت طالبة فى كلية الحقوق أدرس الشريعة الإسلامية الغراء على يد مجموعة من أكبر علماء الشريعة أمثال فضيلة المرحوم الشيخ محمد أبوزهرة وفضيلة المرحوم الشيخ عبدالوهاب خلاف وفضيلة المرحوم الشيخ محمد فرج السنهورى الذى درست عليه مادة الفقه الإسلامى.. وما أكثر ما قامت بينى وبين فضيلة الشيخ «أبوزهرة» من مناقشات فى المدرج وفى قسم الشريعة seatian حول حقوق المرأة المسلمة.. وقد وضح لى من خلال هذه المناقشات أن القانون الوضعى يختلف بل يتناقض فى أحيان كثيرة مع أحكام القرآن الكريم والسنة النبوية المشرقة، ولعل دراستى للشريعة الإسلامية وعشقى لها هو الذى ساعدنى على كتابة قصة فيلم «أريد حلا» بصورة تعرى الاختلاف الشديد بين الواقع الذى يدور فى المحاكم.. وبين ما نصت عليه الشريعة. ولعل من أبرز

بقلم:



حُسن شاه

هذه الاختلافات ما جاء على لسان بطللة الفيلم «درية عزمى» فى لقائها مع وزير العدل - فى الفيلم - من ذكر لواقعة زوجة ثابت بن قيس التى طبق عليها الرسول الكريم حكم «الخلع» منذ أربعة عشر قرنا لقد كان فيلم «أريد حلا» بذلك هو أول من نبه بشكل درامى علنى إلى وجود قاعدة الخلع فى الإسلام. وإذا كان قانون الاجراءات الجديد فى مسائل الأحوال الشخصية الذى أصدره مجلس الشعب قد وجد حلا لمشكلة «درية عزمى» التى ظلت فى المحاكم أكثر من عشر سنوات دون أن تحصل على الطلاق وذلك بالنص على مادة «الخلع».. فإن القانون لم يجد حلا جذريا لكل من مشكلة سنية مهران «رجاء حسين» التى اضطرت

للانحراف تحت ضغط الحاجة الشديدة ولأن زوجها ظل يتهرب - حتى أمام القاضى - من الانفاق عليها وعلى أطفالها منه.. أيضا لم يجد حلا منصفاً للسيدة «حيياة البرانى» التى وجدت نفسها بعد أن تبخرت نفقة عدتها وهى نفقة سنة واحدة تواجه الجوع والتشرد حتى اضطرت للعمل - هى زوجة رئيس مجلس الإدارة - خادمة فى ملجأ بعد حياة زوجية استمرت ثلاثين عاما.

إن النص فى القانون الوضعى - لا قانون الاجراءات - على أن الزوجة التى تطلق بغير رضاها ودون خطأ مُنْهًا تحصل فقط على نفقة العدة وهى نفقة سنة ونفقة المتعة وهى نفقة عامين على الأكثر هو نص يعرض النساء المسلمات للضياع والهوان.. خاصة إذا كانت المرأة لا تعمل.. وهو ما يجعلنا نطالب بضرورة إعادة النظر فى القوانين الموضوعية الخاصة بالأسرة. ومع ذلك فإن واضعى قانون الاجراءات فى مسائل الأحوال الشخصية الجديد قد بذلوا - مشكورين - كل جهدهم من أجل حل مشكلة النفقات.. وهى المشكلة التى تمس لقمة عيش أفراد الأسرة، فوضعوا نصوصا ممتازة «من المادة ٧٢ حتى ٨١ فى القانون» تقضى بإنشاء نظام تأمىنى للأسرة من بين أهدافه ضمان تنفيذ الأحكام الصادرة

بتقرير نفقة للزوجة أو المطلقة أو الأولاد أو الأقارب، وهذا النظام نص القانون على أنه سوف يصدر به قرار من وزير العدل بناء على اتفاق مع وزير الشؤون الاجتماعية ويتولى الاشراف على تنفيذه بنك ناصر الاجتماعى.

ومن هنا .. فإننا نأمل أن يقوم السيد المستشار وزير العدل فاروق سيف النصر باعتبار أن القانون هو الابن الشسرعى لوزارته ومستشاريها وعلى رأسهم المستشار الدكتور فتحى نجيب، وأيضا أن تقوم الدكتورة أمينة الجندي وزير الشؤون الاجتماعية وقد كان لها هى ووزيرة الشؤون الاجتماعية السابقة الدكتورة مرفت تلاوى دور كبير فى مناقشة القانون وادخال بعض التعديلات عليه، أقول نأمل أن يسارع كل من الوزيرين فى عقد الاجتماعات من أجل اصدار هذا القرار الذى سوف يكون فيه الأمان لأفراد الأسرة.. والذى كان يمكن أن يحمى «سنية مهران» وأطفالها من الجريمة والانحراف.. كما كان يمكن أن يمنع «حيياة البرانى» من الموت جوعا وقهرا وحتى يصدر هذا القرار.. بل وحتى تعدل مواد القانون الموضوعى - لا الاجرائى - الخاص بقانون الأحوال الشخصية فإن فيلم «أريد حلا» سوف يظل للأسف حيا وغير قابل للحالة إلى المعاش.

# About the film

## Accolades

— An Egyptian feature film produced in 1975.

A pioneer to discuss the issue of the woman's right to divorce, or "khul".

The film features Egyptian star Faten Hamama, who has played the female lead in a large number of films. Faten Hamama was a notable icon in a period during which actresses led the industry, and the audience was looking forward to what the female main characters had to present. Film stardom was not restricted to men, as it is now.

— Faten Hamama had just returned from a political exile due to disagreements with the security services during the era of President Abdel Nasser, during which she stopped acting. She returned with the beginning of Sadat's era, fulfilling his invitation, to present a number of stark films that discuss women's issues and Egyptian society in the seventies, such as: Empire M, Love and Position, My Love, Afwah Wa Araneb, I Want a Solution, No Consolation for Women.

— 'I want a Solution' became an icon of unconventional cinematic cry. Women's issues allowed to be treated in Egyptian films before that revolved around men's theories and ideas about women's problems. While most films ended with a consensual solution that ultimately consolidated male dominance, this film, made by women, clearly demanded that women obtain their right to divorce, disrupting the film's traditional industry.

— It paved the way for other films to create debate about women's rights in Egyptian laws.



2 "Faten Hamama Leads a Demonstration and Asks for a Solution!"

## Cast and Crew

**Directed by:**  
Saeed Marzouk

**Written by:**  
Hossn Shah

**Screenplay:**  
Saeed Marzouk

**Cast:**  
Faten Hamama, Rushdi Abaza, Laila Taher,  
Kamal Yassin, Amina Rizk

## Budget and Production

— Faten Hamama, an influential star at the time, and Hosn Shah, a well-known writer, reached out to several producers who refused to take on such a "heavy" film, according to their description.

— Faten Hamama presented the idea to her friend, actor, and producer Salah Zulfikar, the director of notable films like A Taste of Fear, who suggested taking time and thinking about it.

— The producer and the director went to the courts and witnessed the pain of thousands of women. As a result, Zulfikar decided to produce the film as it deserved.

## Chronological Context

- In 1929, Egyptian Personal Status Law No. 25 was issued, regulating marital and family relations.
- The law includes discriminating articles against women, including expulsion from the marital apartment with the children in the event of divorce. It also gives a man absolute authority to marry another woman without notifying the first wife. The law provides the husband with the unilateral right to determine the fate of married life and separation. It also allows him to discipline the wife through the "house of obedience"; if the wife leaves the marital house, the police would arrest her and bring her back, even if she was subjected to violence and abuse.
- The law remained unchanged for fifty years as Egyptian women continued their struggle and successfully conquered professional and official fields.
- Religious figures, judges, legal scholars, and Islamic law institutions defended the old law, claiming that men's rights are a heavenly gift approved by religion for the sake of the stability of family foundations.
- The old law ignored the multiple options that Islamic law granted women to preserve their rights. Some of them were deliberately excluded, such as the clear religious women's right to divorce, one that the Prophet Muhammad granted a woman who came to him with complaints about her husband.
- In 1979, the public was surprised when the President changed the Personal Status Law after dissolving the People's Assembly, a constitutional right granted to the Head of State in emergencies.
- The new law included: Restricting polygamy, acknowledging the right of the first or second wife to divorce without proving harm, giving the custodial woman the right to keep the marital home until her custody of the children ends, and abolishing the compulsory implementation of obedience.
- After the Sadat regime ended, the Supreme Constitutional Court abolished Law 44 of 1979 and reinforced the old law of 1929, leaving women to lose the few rights they had hardly obtained.
- The film's release in 1975 initiated the battle to change the personal status law. It lasted until 2000 when the rule of khul' (repudiation law, the divorce law that improves the position of women) was applied for the first time in Egypt.
- Thousands of Egyptian women suffered from the lack of legislative protection guaranteeing their rights. Courtrooms were filled with pending divorce cases, not to mention the fates of children left without a provider after fathers walked out without obligation, leaving mothers to face ordeals alone.



Law change proceedings



## Impact Networks

- 'I want a Solution' used a vast network of impact sources and achieved notable results.
- Gihan El-Sadat, the president's wife at the time, who played a prominent social role, asked some feminist figures to tackle women's issues through cinema. That political support gave hope to the team.
- Faten Hamama was one of the most famous and influential Egyptian stars. It was enough for her to take on any project for producers and distribution networks to want to be part of it.
- Women writers and journalists worked on presenting the issue to the public and putting forward community discussions before the film screening and then during its presentation and preaching issues that carry a "strong" voice for women in society.
- The producer, also a renowned actor, had his artistic vision reflected in the film's production fashion and through local distribution networks in the capital and the governorates.



## Impact Distribution

- The film was screened for sixteen weeks, a record number when theaters would play films for a maximum of five weeks.
- It played in the governorates of Egypt: Rivoli Cinema in Tanta, Egypt Cinema in Zagazig, Cinema Nader in El-Mahalla, Friendship Cinema in Aswan, Egypt Cinema in Suez, Al-Horreya Cinema, and Cinema Rio in Port Said.
- 'I Want A Solution' achieved popular success even though it was screened simultaneously with widely acclaimed films, such as 'Amira My Love', which remained for 22 weeks in theaters, and 'The Grandson', for 20 weeks.
- The film's revenues amounted to 40,185 Egyptian Pounds, while the industry revenue average was ten thousand pounds.
- The Women's Secretariat of the National Party organized special screenings to watch the film in the presence of Faten Hamama.
- The film was broadcasted on official television afterward and has been played for decades. It is considered one of the most influential classic Egyptian films that millions have watched.

“Sharia Between Implementation and Postponement  
And I want a Solution Between Marriage and Love”

**كلمة النور**

**الشريعة بين التطبيق والتأجيل  
وأريد حلا بين الحليل والخليل**

خرجت من عند وزير الداخلية ، اللواء حسن أبو باشا ، بعد اللقاء العاصف ، بصحبة الأستاذ محمد أحمد عبد الشافي ، وكيل حزب الاحرار آنذاك ، وعضو مجلس الشورى الحالي ، وبعد ان اوصلته الى منزله اطرقت افكر ، لماذا يتمسكون بقانون الاحوال الشخصية الجديد برغم انه افقد الرجل المصرى قوامته على بيته ، وسلب من يده مقومات هذه القوامه ؟ لقد نلت تجريرتى فى

العمل فى الحمام ، فى ظل تطبيق كل من القانونين ، القديم والجديد ان سلطان الرجل المصرى فى بيته ، وهو المسئول عنه ، قد هوى - بفعل فاعل - بوادى ذلك الى انهيار كثير من الاسر المصرية ، وكانت الزوجة هى الخاسر الاول ، برغم ان القانون الجديد اراد بحسب زعمهم بحمايتها بل لماذا يؤجلون الشريعة ولايطبقونها؟ ودار فى راسى تكريات صديقى ذى المنصب الرفيع الذى تمسك باهداب الدين بو اراد ان يقيم بيته على الاسس الاسلامية ، ووجد معارضته من زوجه التى رفضت ان تضع الخمار على راسها وان تستر نراعيتها ونحرها بوراح يحاول معها بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة فما زالت الانفورا وقد انجبا من الاولاد اربعة

ما زالوا فى ميعة الصبا يوشب الخلف بينهما ، على اساس تمسكه وتفريطها ، الى الحد الذى اخرجته من منزل الزوجية ، بواقامت ضده القضايا قضية نفقة واخرى تطلق واخرى مصروفات مدرسية وبلغت شهود الزور الى سلطات المحاكم .

د البقية ص ٩



**المهمزة دعيبس**

**المحامى بالنقض**

## Impact Dynamics

### Change in opinions

– 'I want a Solution' caused a major societal shock among different sectors, the impact of which spanned for successive years.

### Building local communities

– The film was the first to discuss the need to change the law, attracting thousands of women around this issue.

### Change of Structure

– Gihan El-Sadat made statements to Al-Musawwer magazine as the film was released and expressed the need to change the law.

– Many women leaders presented a draft law to the People's Assembly, as it is the legislative authority empowered to amend laws.

– Some religious and legal institutions' positions on the issue of divorce have changed after years of neglect and exclusion.

– Women's right to divorce has become one of their fundamental rights with the recognition of these institutions after family courts were established to examine such cases.

### Behavior Change

– Women writers and journalists have continued to write on the same issue for years, and calls have risen for the need to draft a modern alternative law in line with the essence of Islamic law.

– The Egyptian woman's rightful resort to taking her husband to court is no longer a "disgraceful" matter as it was in the past. In fact, the film focused on women's pain, patience, and determination in their battles.

# Chronological Context

## 1929

The Egyptian Personal Status Law #25 is issued.

## 1973

Several stories are published about the suffering of Egyptian women in the face of the personal status law. Mrs. Gihan El-Sadat, the president's wife, meets with a group of women and discusses the need to change the Personal Status Law and the necessity to make a film informing society of these women's stories.

## 1975

Posters bearing a stark picture of Faten Hamama are published. The Women's Secretariat of the National Party organizes special screenings to watch the film in the presence of Faten Hamama. Faten Hamama organizes special screenings for some influential social figures. Al-Daawa magazine, affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, launches its campaign rejecting the ideas presented by the film.

## 1979

The public opinion is taken by surprise when the President issues a decision to change the Personal Status Law.

The film is released and plays for sixteen weeks. It screens in Egyptian governorates. It achieves mass success, and its revenues amount to 40,1185 Egyptian Pounds, whereas the average revenue was 10,000 Pounds. The film is broadcasted on official television and plays for decades. It is considered one of the most influential classic Egyptian films watched by millions.

# Chronological Context

**1981**

After the Sadat regime, the Supreme Constitutional Court abolishes Law 44 of 1979 and restores the old law issued in 1929.

**2000**

With the beginning of the new millennium, Law No. (1) of 2000 is issued and entered into force on March first of the same year. Article No. 20 of this law gives the wife the right to request a divorce by khul' (the husband's repudiation), which would be irrevocable, and the ruling may not be subject to appeal. It is considered the first real victory for the Egyptian women's will toward self-determination.

Egyptian cinema and television productions continue to shed light on the rights of Egyptian women, especially concerning the Personal Status Law.

FILM

IMPACT

## The film as an inspiration for women's issues

After the film's release in 1975, films that presented women's issues intertwined with prevailing laws and existing norms went on, including:

- 'No Consolation for Women', 1979. The film puts forth the social stigma divorced women in Egyptian society endure.
- 'Al-Takhshiba', 1984. A doctor confronts harassment, which leads to her family's destruction.
- The film 'Excuse Us, Law', 1985 discusses the law's inequality in marital infidelity cases, allowing a husband to kill his wife to preserve honor while the woman turns into a criminal if the case is reversed.
- 'A File in Vice', 1986. The story of young women who fall victim to the misuse of laws and are stigmatized for life.
- 'Wife of an Important Man', 1987, relates the life of a security services official.
- In Ramadan of 2022, personal status law issues reappeared through a well-known series, 'Faten Amal Harbi'. The pain continues after limited amendments, and women are still struggling to enact a new law from which to express themselves.

Research and writing **Rasha Azab**

Research Assistant **Nihal Al-Mirghani**

Proofreading **Jennifer Romanos**

Graphic Design **Abraham Zeitoun**

Special thanks:

**Beadie Finzi / Sandra Sayej / Mustafa Youssef**

Some of the images, articles, and references in this research are not the property of the producers and were collected from the Internet. Please don't hesitate to inform us regarding property rights.

Get in touch at

**hello@aflamuna.org**

# Accolades

— 'I Want a Solution' gained successive artistic acclaim, confirming its position as a founding film for the women's rights movement.

— The film won the best film award in the competition held by the Ministry of Culture for cinema in 1975.

— Egypt nominated the film to be considered for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film.

— Salah Zulficar won the Best Producer award.

— It was the only Egyptian film participating in the 1975 Tehran Film Festival.

— 'I Want a Solution' and 'The Mummy' represented Egyptian cinema in the Arab Film Week in Italy in 1975.

— Twenty-one years after its production, 'I Want a Solution' was selected by the Higher Committee of Festivals to represent Egyptian cinema at the International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995.

# Law Change Proceedings Chronology

## 1975

- The battle to change the personal status law was initiated with the movie's release in 1975. It lasted until 2000 when the law of khul' (repudiation law, the divorce law that improves the position of women) was applied for the first time in Egypt.
- Parliament continued to ignore the calls to change the unjust laws. Religious institutions, the judiciary, and parliament did not care about the matter.

## 1979

- The Personal Status Law 44 of 1979 was issued.
- The president's wife tried to convince the president of the importance of changing the law. He agreed in theory. Then, Sheikhs Gad al-Haq, Abd al-Rahman Bisar, and Abd al-Moneim al-Nimr were consulted and assigned to work on the law, along with a committee of Al-Azhar sheiks, the Grand Mufti, some lawyers, and a group of women such as Amina Al-Saeed, Aisha Rateb, and Amal Othman.
- At this time, the opposition to the Sadat regime was expanding due to the policies of openness, destitution, normalization with the Israeli occupation, and arrests of opposition members. Anything issued by the state found fierce opposition.
- Political Islamic groups were expanding their activities in governmental and civil institutions and mobilizing the public against changing the laws related to the provisions of Sharia.

— In 1979, public opinion was taken by surprise when the President issued a decision to change the Personal Status Law after dissolving the People's Assembly, a constitutional right granted to the Head of State in emergency situations.

— Civil and Islamic opposition launched media wars against changing the law and called it "Gihan's Law", rejecting the intervention of the President's wife in managing the country's affairs. This propaganda involved disseminating the role of women in public work and political decisions.

## 1985

— After the Sadat regime, the Supreme Constitutional Court abolished Law 44 of 1979, and the old law of 1929 was reinforced, leaving women to lose the few rights they had hardly obtained.

— The Constitutional Court did not repeal Law 44 in objection to its provisions, and the judiciary and law officials announced that the fall was due to the way in which the President imposed the law on all state institutions, whereas, in fact, there were clear objections to changing the law in the first place.

— The news created disappointment and frustration within women writers, journalists, and feminist movement representatives. They considered that the issue of women's rights had fallen into the trap of political settlements between the government and the opposition and that although Law 44 gave women very little, the patriarchal society couldn't accept it.

## 2000

— With the beginning of the new millennium, Law No. (1) of 2000 was issued and entered into force on March first of the same year.

— Article No. 20 of this law gives the wife the right to request a divorce by khul' (the repudiation of the husband), which would be irrevocable, and the ruling may not be subject to appeal. It was considered the first real victory for the Egyptian women's will toward self-determination.

— Wafaa Mosaad Gabr filed for a divorce suit on March 12, 2000, before the Tanta Personal Status Court. She was the first woman to file a claim of this kind in Egypt.

— The first ruling for khul' in Egypt was issued by the Cairo Court of First Instance, the Personal Status Departments, in favor of Aziza Bahaa El-Din on September 1, 2000, six months after the law came into force.

— The divorce law was greatly opposed by a large sector of men, some Islamic movements, and sheiks. Some lawyers and jurists argued that it was unconstitutional and that the law was entirely motivated by depriving the husband of his right to appeal the ruling and denying him self-defense.

— Two years after the law was issued, the Supreme Constitutional Court ruling came in its favor, recognizing the constitutionality of divorce provisions for the wife by khul'.

## 2019

— Al-Azhar and a group of parliamentarians presented a new draft of the personal status law.

— The role of women is still advisory in the laws regulating their affairs.

— Societal debate still exists about the new law, which feminists widely reject. The National Council for Women also made observations regarding the new bill.

# About 1975 Egypt

- Egypt had entered a new phase after a major war with the Israeli occupation that extended for six years.
- That year Egypt was enjoying free markets and imported goods after years of siege and austerity. Port Said became a center for new trade, brokerage, and quick profit spread, as Al Shawarby Street became a focal point of consumption and smuggled goods.
- The nationalization of the film industry had lasted for eight years, during which the state controlled the film production, theaters, and studios. That era ended with failure, and private production companies reappeared. Many artists who resorted to working in Lebanon returned to Egypt.