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GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

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Former Isis Yazidi sex slaves take up arms for revenge, to win back Mosul and 'bring our women home'



Yazidi soldiers cheer a fallen comrade on November 15, 2015 near Sinjar

'We have a lot of our women in Mosul being held as slaves. Their families are waiting for them. The liberation might help bring them home'

An armed brigade made up entirely of former Yazidi sex slaves has joined ranks with the Kurdish Peshmerga to take back Mosul from Isis and "bring our women home".

In a region with a proud history of all-female fighting forces, the Yazidi brigade has seen its numbers bolstered in recent weeks as more and more women break free from the Isis jihadist group's oppressive regime.

Speaking in an interview with Fox News, the brigade's leader Captain Khatoon Khider said there are 500 recruits awaiting training to join the 123 who have already taken their place alongside the Peshmerga on the front line.

Read more:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-yazidi-sex-slaves-take-up-arms-for-mosul-fight-to-bring-our-women-home-a6865056.html>

Sisters-in-Arms: Syrian Women Fight Daesh to 'Take Back Their Homeland'



Ordinary citizens of Syria are combatting Daesh terrorists who have been waging war in the country for the last five years. The citizens have taken up arms to defend their country and drive terrorists away. Syrian women are actively joining battalions and fighting side by side with men.

Silviya Kuri, a 40 year old entrepreneur, left her job to join the battalion of the national militia fighting in the province of Hasaka against Daesh.

Talking about what pushed her to join, Silviya said, "Great love for my people pushed me to leave my small children at my parents so that I can stand on par with the men of my province and defend our homeland."

Terrorists in Syria have been waging war for over 5 years and have demonstrated no mercy for children, women or the elderly. "The terrorists are concerned with two things only- who to rape and kill and what to destroy and steal? Hence, I decided to learn how to handle weapons," Silviya explained.

Read more:

<http://sputniknews.com/middleeast/20160114/1033151159/syria-women-battle-terrorists.html#ixzz45dWKAxvT>

How do we end inequality? Women's rights activists speak out

Six months ago today, the UN general assembly adopted the sustainable development goals (SDGs), an ambitious agenda to end extreme poverty and tackle inequality and climate change by 2030. We asked some of the activists attending the annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York to share their views on what is needed to achieve the 17 goals and 169 targets.

Jeanette Suka Ila, World Young Women's Christian Association peer educator, Papua New Guinea



One of the priority areas we should look at is putting girls at the centre of development, meaning girls should take part in decision-making. They should sit at the table because most of the issues we are talking about now are women and girls' issues. If we put girls at the centre then we will achieve some of the sustainable development goals.

Ezgi Koçak, youth activist working on LGBTI rights, Turkey

Read more:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/mar/25/end-inequality-womens-rights-activists-speak-out-sustainable-development-goals-commission-status-women>

It's time to decolonize feminist knowledge



African and feminist scholars can make active steps to decolonise knowledge production, according to Signe Arnfred from the Institute of Society and Globalization at Roskilde University, Denmark. She was speaking at a University Sussex Development Lecture on 18 February 2016.

The lecture highlighted the close relationship between the colonial process and knowledge production in Africa, right from the establishment of the first western style universities on the continent. 'These kinds of universities were not really for Africans they were for the settlers,' she said.

Recent efforts to decolonise education have been boosted by the Rhodes Must Fall movement which began in March 2014 as students protested against a statue of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Rhodes was a British imperialist who helped create the territory of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia). The UCT statue was removed in April 2015. The movement to challenge structural racism and remove similar statues spread to universities across the world, particularly in southern Africa.

In her talk, Arnfred drew attention to the work of scholars who argue that the concepts of race and gender are themselves colonial constructs.

Read more:

<http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/news/it%E2%80%99s-time-decolonise-feminist-knowledge>

India – Muslim Women Trained as Quran Experts, Challenge Male-Dominated Traditions



Indian Muslim women training to become qazis, who are experts on Quranic injunctions regarding marriage and the family, among other religious laws.

Being a qazi, or a Muslim expert on religious law, means much more to Safia Akhtar than just having the power to solemnize a marriage. “As a qazi, I want to be a true counselor to the women of my community and not only help them resolve issues concerning their rights but also ensure that they get justice,” she said.

Akhtar, who has been training at a center for Islamic learning with women from across India, knows that she may be challenged in playing a legal-religious role that Muslim societies around the world have traditionally reserved for men. “I may encounter opposition and I know there will be hurdles to overcome, but whatever I do is going to be as per the holy Quran, so I am not worried,” she said.

She is one of 30 Muslim women training in Jaipur, Rajasthan, at a center for Islamic learning and theology. The center, Darun Uloom Niswaan, was created by the Indian Muslim Women’s Movement (Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan).

Read more:

<http://www.wunrn.com/2016/03/india-muslim-women-trained-as-quran-experts-challenge-male-dominated-traditions/>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is a tool of war, but we have the weapons to end that

From Iraq to Bosnia, women are abused in war. We need to implement the laws we already have to protect women and seek justice that empowers survivors

With each passing day, there is another story about the horrific violence Islamic State is perpetrating against women and girls. Isis fighters reportedly raped four women, then stoned them to death in February for “committing adultery”. Iraqi forces recently found a mass grave containing the bodies of women and children believed murdered by Isis. And in 2014, Isis massacred an estimated 5,000 civilians on Mount Sinjar in Iraq, causing hundreds of people to flee and condemning hundreds of Yazidi women to sexual slavery.

The stories from women who have escaped Isis reveal extreme brutality. Journalists and human rights organisations reveal the severity of these atrocities, including sexual slavery, forced marriage, kidnapping and rape.

Though each conflict is unique, we have seen time and again that sexual violence is a systematic and strategic tool of war – not simply an inevitable consequence.

Read more:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/mar/02/sexual-violence-is-a-tool-of-war-but-we-have-the-weapons-to-end-that>

Plan to tackle sexual violence during wars 'at risk without William Hague'

No clear plan to implement high-profile campaign championed by former foreign secretary, says Lords report

A UK-led campaign against sexual violence in war risks collapsing without the personal leadership of the former foreign secretary William Hague, a parliamentary report has found.

Hague, in conjunction with the Hollywood star Angelina Jolie, made the issue of combating sexual violence in conflict his surprise personal priority as foreign secretary. The pair highlighted the issue at the 2014 Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in London.

Hague was in part influenced by his special adviser Arminka Helić, who played a key role in establishing the Lords select committee inquiry into the Foreign Office's continued approach to the issue that delivered its report on Tuesday.

The comprehensive study found the government has no five-year plan to implement its sexual violence in conflict initiative, and no adequate means for diplomats to measure whether pledges made on sexual violence at international summits are being implemented.

Whitehall also has no coherent list of the countries in which it is prioritising its work.

Read more:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/12/plan-to-tackle-sexual-violence-during-wars-at-risk-without-hague>

What sort of justice do survivors of sexual war crimes want?

The House of Lords select committee on sexual violence in conflict released its report, Sexual Violence in Conflict: A War Crime, on Tuesday. It's an assessment of the UK government's work to stop people being raped during wars and of how best to support survivors. The inquiry touches on the accountability of perpetrators and justice for victims.

Surely, at the heart of this debate lies the bigger question of what is the purpose of a criminal justice system? Is it about bringing offenders to trial, increasing public safety, or providing support to victims? Or all three?

I have asked many survivors of sexual violence, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Rwanda, what justice means to them. Some say it means seeing their abuser in prison; others say not being blamed for what happened to them; some request cash for business start-ups to be financially independent. Still others want "justice" for their children born as a result of rape – to see them treated fairly by teachers and the wider community.

Read more:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/12/justice-survivors-sexual-war-crimes-violence-in-conflict>

Missing Ugandan maid fuels fears of abuse in Saudi Arabia



Jannat Mubiru has heard nothing from her daughter since the 27-year-old called to say she had arrived safely in Riyadh, where she was due to start work as a maid five months ago.

Mubiru has repeatedly phoned the Saudi number her daughter, Shamim Nakitende, used but her calls went unanswered at first, and then were blocked.

"There are so many stories of Ugandans being mistreated in Saudi Arabia. I am so worried," Mubiru told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"Shamim left behind a daughter and son and it's difficult to answer their daily questions about their mother without knowing if she is still alive or not," she added.

Since Nakitende left, the company which had offered her work in Saudi Arabia has closed its external recruitment department and severed links with the unit's director over violations of recruitment guidelines, Mubiru said.

More than 10,000 Ugandans are estimated to be working in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait as security guards, domestic workers, drivers and cashiers in supermarkets and fast food restaurants.

Read more:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160413010257-e32si/>

75 Syrian girls freed from a Lebanese human trafficking mafia located in Jounieh

Security forces in Mount Lebanon uncovered in a special operation one of the most dangerous human trafficking networks in Lebanon led by the Lebanese businessman, M.J, owner of Chez Maurice and Silver night clubs in Jounieh, north of Beirut who has been arrested three months ago.

Around 75 of the girls who were liberated, the majority were Syrian nationals, admitted they have been systematically beaten and subjected to mental and physical torture, and forced to sell themselves under the threat of publishing their nude pictures.

The Internal Security Directorate General pointed out in a statement issued to this effect that the "arrest has been made in two stages.

On March 27 and 29, 2016, the above squad raided the nightspots and private apartments that used to house the girls in question. As a result, some 10 men were detained along with 8 women supposedly working as guards and managers of the said apartments, whereas 2 suspects are still at large."

The girls, the statement added, were handed over to a number of associations on the request of the competent justice department.

Investigation is still ongoing to capture the remaining members of the trafficking network, the statement added.

Read more:

<http://www.weeportal-lb.org/news/75-syrian-girls-freed-lebanese-human-trafficking-mafia-located-jounieh>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Saudis act against anti-Islamic footballer haircuts

Saudi sports authorities are taking action against footballer hairstyles deemed to be anti-Islamic in the ultra-conservative kingdom, local media reported.



A video posted online on Friday showed one player being given a last-minute haircut before a fixture to comply with Saudi Football Federation guidelines.

The video shows a referee using scissors to remove a small mohawk at the front of his head before allowing him onto the pitch.

The head of the kingdom's youth organisation Tuesday asked its sport federations and Olympic committee to "ban the qazaa phenomenon", using an Arabic name for eccentric styles often sported by footballers, the website www.arriyadiyah.com reported.

Such haircuts are against Islam and Saudi traditions, one commentator wrote in the newspaper Al-Jazirah on Friday, urging the football federation to "impose sanctions" on offending players whose "bizarre haircuts are imitated by their fans in schools".

Saudi Arabia, where many foreign professional footballers play for local teams, applies a rigorous doctrine of Islam known as Wahhabism.

Read more:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3531568/Saudis-act-against-anti-Islamic-footballer-haircuts.html>

Iranian international marathon is men only

Iran has announced its first international marathon, "I Run Iran," saying the aim is to improve the country's image in the West and to "clear the path towards peace and friendship."

Just one thing is missing, though. Women. Race founder Sebastian Straten, a Dutchman who fell in love with the country while backpacking in 2005, told the Mehr News agency that "unfortunately, women are not allowed to run this first limited edition.

There are many (Iranian) women who like to run and we hope in the next edition we (will) get the permission for women to run the marathon."

The object of the race on April 9, which has been approved by the Iranian authorities, is to "unite humanity," Mr Straten added. "I expect it to have a positive impact on the image the West has of Iran. It is more than a marathon. It is opening the Persian gates to tourism. To show the real beauty and treasures of Iran!"

To this end, Mr Straten's Iran Silk Road travel agency is offering excursions to Shiraz and Persepolis, a Persian pasta party, a post-race visit to a hamam, a Persian poetry party and a round trip tour of Esfahan, Kashan and Tehran.

More than 200 men from 40 countries have already registered for half of the 400 places. These include 23 from the US and 15 from the UK.

The run starts at the historic Shiraz city gate and ends at the Persepolis Gate of all Nations,

Read more:

<http://myinforms.com/en/a/21300731-iranian-international-marathon-is-men-only/>

Leaving women out of development statistics just doesn't add up

The information we rely on to make policy fails to reflect the reality of the lives of women and girls

We have a sexist data crisis: information we depend on to make social and economic policy, and to monitor progress, is unable to reflect the reality of the lives of women and girls.

In the low-income neighborhoods of Lima, Peru, travel time and childcare demands stand in the way of businesswomen's ability to complete training designed to improve their practices and income.

In Nigeria, farm households led by women grow less food than those led by men because they have limited access to fertilizers and tractors. The design of these programmes and many others are impaired by the absence of data and by bad data on women and girls.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is fifth on the list of 17 ambitions UN member states have pledged to tackle under the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

These practices – all harmful, many illegal – are some of the more shocking examples of gender disparity and they rightfully attract the most condemnation. But inequality can also be more subtle, and thus harder to account for.

Read more:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/07/leaving-women-girls-out-of-development-statistics-doesnt-add-up>

MP Mkheiber submits a draft law that gives married women the right to run for elections in their original place of birth

In cooperation with the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW), MP Ghassan Mkheiber submitted to the Parliament yesterday a draft law that gives married woman the right to run for elections at her place of birth before marriage.

The NCLW has prepared the text of the bill, which is an adjustment of the current municipality bill, and which ends the discrimination against married women in this respect.

To note, that by virtue of the provisions of the law in effect, the membership of a woman at the municipal board ends with her relocation, and therefore, the transfer of her registry, to her husband's birthplace upon her marriage.

Therefore, the proposed draft considers that the current law is in contradiction with the Lebanese Constitution which states full equality between citizens, as well as with the International Declaration of the Human Rights and relevant UN agreements and conventions to which Lebanon is a party.

It calls for the elimination of the "provision that requires mentioning the name of the candidate who wishes to become a member of the municipal board on the electoral list because it is not in the interest of married women candidates whose names have been removed from the list after moving their registry outside the constituency as a result of marriage." (Al Mustaqbal, April 12, 2016)

Read more:

<http://www.weeportal-lb.org/news/mp-mkheiber-submits-draft-law-gives-married-women-right-run-elections-%E2%80%8Etheir-original-place>

More Women in the Work Force & in More Senior Positions, Benefits Women, Their Companies, & Their Countries' Economies

International Women's Day—March 8—is one of my favorite days. It is a time to celebrate the impressive progress women at all levels of the career ladder have made in recent decades. More women in the labor force, and in more senior positions is good news for women, for their companies, and for their countries' economies.

A new IMF staff study finds that in Europe, national policies, even taking account of personal preferences, can boost women's participation in the workforce and enhance their chances for advancement.

The research, which looked at 2 million firms in 34 countries in Europe, also finds that the more women in senior managerial positions and in corporate boards, the more profitable firms are. One more woman in senior management or on a corporate board is associated with 8–13 basis points higher return on assets. High corporate profitability could support investment and productivity—another channel through which more women in the workforce can help mitigate Europe's potential growth slowdown.

Read more:

<http://www.wunrn.com/2016/04/more-women-in-the-work-force-in-more-senior-positions-benefits-women-their-companies-their-countries-economies/>

Feminist Analysis of Social and Solidarity Economy Practices: Views from Latin America and India

This project is coordinated by Christine Verschuur and Filipe Calvão at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva. The UNRISD Gender and Development Team and the Social Dimensions of Sustainable Development Team are participating as research partners along with other institution.

Social and solidarity economic activities can be found in almost all sectors of the economy. Long ignored, social and solidarity economy (SSE) is receiving growing attention from scholars and public authorities. However, this interest remains for the most part gender blind, even though women play a major role in SSE activities. This research project aims to address these gaps in SSE research and policies from a feminist perspective. It will contribute to both the empirical evidence base and to theoretical debates on social reproduction.

The Research Issue in Context

SSE practices (re)invent non-capitalist forms of management that allow workers to re-appropriate the means of production and that can re-activate social relations based on cooperation and solidarity.

Public authorities are increasingly recognizing SSE. For instance, several Latin American countries have passed laws and constitutional articles, and have created Secretariats dedicated to SSE. In India, although the term “solidarity economy” is not used, grassroots organizations are increasingly engaging in lobbying activities with public authorities. At an international level, this growing interest has manifested itself through the creation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on SSE.

Read more:

<http://www.unrisd.org/feminist-sse>

RESOURCES & CALLS
BOOKS & REPORTS

Rape in war must be tackled as seriously as genocide - UK report

Sexual violence in conflict is a "horrendous and barbaric crime" that must be treated as seriously as genocide or slavery, a British parliamentary report said on Tuesday, calling for redoubled efforts to stamp it out.

Britain must keep up the momentum of a high-profile campaign kick-started by Hollywood star Angelina Jolie and former British Foreign Secretary William Hague to end the global scourge or risk squandering progress, it said.

The report also urged Britain to resist any peace settlement in Syria that proposed amnesties for perpetrators of sexual violence during the conflict.

It also called for the creation of a new tribunal to try peacekeepers accused of sex crimes, and said the next U.N. secretary general should put the issue at the top of the agenda.

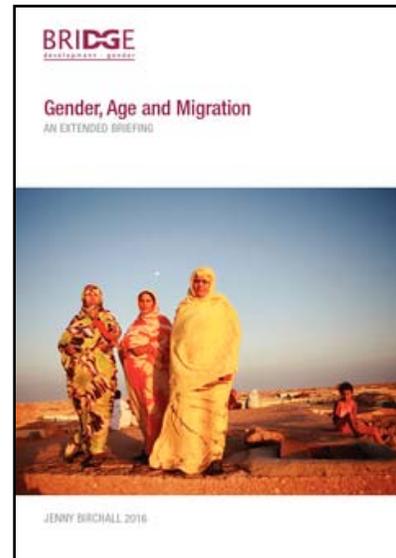
Peacekeepers and humanitarian staff have been accused of sexual abuse, rape, paedophilia and trafficking in 11 countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Britain should push for the "naming and shaming" of states that fail to investigate or take action against peacekeepers accused of these crimes, said the report by a committee of the House of Lords, Britain's upper parliamentary chamber

Read more:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160412175228-d2lh6/>

Gender, age and migration: an extended briefing



In many parts of the world, migration has replaced fertility and mortality as the leading agent of demographic change. A person's gender, age, religion, race, ethnicity, sexuality and health or disability shape every stage of the migration experience. This briefing focuses on gender and age, offering an insight into who migrates and who doesn't, reasons for migrating, experiences of the migration process and what life is like for different groups of migrants and refugees when, and if, they reach their destinations. It concludes with a set of recommendations for more gender and age sensitive policy making.

Read more:

<http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/bridge-publications/reports/document/A76329>

For a direct link to document:

<http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/10410/Gender%20Age%20and%20Migration%20Extended%20Briefing.pdf?sequence=1>

Call for Applications: Family Law Reform to Challenge Gender-Based Violence

Women's Learning Partnership announces call for researchers for Family Law Reform and Gender-Based Violence Project

Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) has undertaken a three-year research/advocacy project leading to a global campaign on reform of discriminatory laws against women in the family.

The project will focus on the relationship between articles of the law and perpetration of violence against women and girls. The attached document describes the terms of reference for the eleven country case studies the results of which will contribute to developing strong advocacy methods for our global campaign.

Applicants must have a graduate degree in a related field, extensive research experience, and good drafting skills in English.

Interested candidates should submit a CV, letter of interest, names of three professional references, and a writing sample in English to wlp@learningpartnership.org by April 20, 2016.

Please note: Candidates should also list the country in which they are based and the country or countries where they can carry out a case study from among the 11 countries listed in the terms of reference. The initial phase of the project will include case studies from the following 11 WLP partner countries: Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Senegal, Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, Palestine, Turkey, Iran, and Brazil, as well as an additional case study from India.

Read more:

<http://www.learningpartnership.org/lib/call-applications-family-law-reform-challenge-gender-based-violence>

Reframing Men & Boys in Policy for Gender Equality

Gender inequality remains a critical challenge, threatening to severely undermine progress toward the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Women and girls still have fewer opportunities, rights and freedoms than do men and boys. Women continue to be paid less than their male counterparts for the same work, spend significantly more time caring for others than men do, and remain underrepresented in positions of power across business and government sectors (United Nations 2014a; UN Women 2015; World Bank 2012).

However, while many gender equality policies and programmes only target and work with women and girls, compelling evidence has emerged to show that engaging men and boys in these processes is crucial if lasting change is to be achieved.

There are three clear reasons why men and boys should be factored into gender equality initiatives:

- Gender equality requires addressing unequal gender relations
- Engaging men and boys can enable positive outcomes for women and girls
- Gender inequality has negative effects for men and boys, and also affects societies at large

Read more:

<http://www.wunrn.com/2016/04/reframing-men-boys-in-policy-for-gender-equality/>

For a direct link to report:

<http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/9709/FINAL.pdf?sequence=1>

Gender Data Portal

The Gender Data Portal is the World Bank Group's comprehensive source for the latest sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics covering demography, education, health, access to economic opportunities, public life and decision-making, and agency.

For a direct link to portal:

<http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/>

2012-2016: crises, feminism and European policies

The report contains proposals to revitalize an encompassing women's rights agenda. The report is the result of the meetings WIDE+ organized in Barcelona, Spain, on 17 and 18 June this year, financed through the Spanish and Catalan Development Agency.

Read more:

<https://wideplus.org/2015-2012-crisis-feminism-and-policies/>

For a direct link to report:

https://wideplusnetwork.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/wide-report-2015_en.pdf

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