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Egyptian bill seeks gender equality for adultery



A bride and groom have their photos taken in front of the tomb of late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and the Unknown Soldier monument, in Rabia al-Adawiya Square in Nasr City, east of Cairo, Aug. 11, 2013.

A controversial bill in Egypt that would make the penalties for adultery the same for men and women faces many hurdles. Proposed by Margaret Azer, a Copt and leader of the Support Egypt coalition, the bill has aroused strong opposition among members of the parliament's Legislation and Religion committees.

The Egyptian penal code states that a wife who is shown to have committed adultery must serve two years in prison. An adulterous husband, however, receives only six months, and then only if he commits adultery in the house he shares with his wife. Otherwise, there is no punishment for him.

According to Qanun Nashaz (Unfair Law), a campaign by Nazra for Feminist Studies, the code also states that a husband who kills his wife and her partner in flagrante delicto, in the act of sex, shall receive a lenient sentence of only 24 hours in detention. A wife who commits the same offense faces a charge of willful murder, which means she would most likely receive a sentence of hard labor or life.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/10/egypt-new-bill-define-adultery.html#ixzz4NMof247l>

Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory – UN Women’s Rights Expert Calls for a New Peace Process with Full Participation of Women

Reducing violence against women and promoting gender equality are two underused tools in bridging fragmented and divided communities and achieving peace, said United Nations human rights expert Dubravka Šimonović, at the end of her first official visit* to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory/State of Palestine.

“I would like to call both sides to start a new peace process in which women would fully participate and even take the lead and in which international human rights law and humanitarian law would be applied jointly,” the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women said.

“My visit takes place after a long absence of any other UN Special Rapporteur visits and I hope that this translates the willingness of both governments to strengthen their efforts to eliminate violence against women and to uphold women’s rights in public and private sphere in line with their international human rights obligations and commitments,” Ms. Šimonović underscored.

During her twelve-day visit to examine the overall situation of violence against women and girls, and gather first-hand information from women survivors of violence, the expert met with representatives of each Government, the relevant authorities and civil society organisations, as well as with UN officials. She also visited shelters for victims of domestic violence and met with women victims of violence.

Read more:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20584&LangID=E>

How this 14-year-old Syrian refugee is fighting to end child marriage



Omaima Hoshan, a young Syrian refugee who has started a campaign to end child marriage, Zaatari refugee camp, Jordan, March 30, 2016.

Omaima Hoshan, 14, wasn't really aware of early marriage until her best friend dropped out of school in the fifth grade. Omaima was very concerned. Her friend was an excellent student — the best in their class — and had always dreamed about becoming a doctor, so why would she leave school? Omaima learned from the teacher that her friend had married her 18-year-old cousin under pressure from her father. The girl hadn't even turned 13 yet. Omaima never saw her again.

From that day, Omaima noticed more girls leaving school as young as 12, 13 or 14 years old. She remembered thinking it was totally wrong. They were just children, like her. She talked about it with her father, Thaer Hoshan, who had studied law back in Syria.

"He told me that I should speak up if something is wrong and encouraged me to talk to the girls about this subject in order to discourage the practice," Omaima told Al-Monitor in Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp, where she has lived with her parents and four brothers since they fled Syria in 2012.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/09/jordan-syrian-refugees-early-marriage-awareness.html>

Visionary, Defiant and Resilient: Bahrain's Dissenting Women

The Gulf State of Bahrain is known for its extravagance. Gloating over multi-million dollar investments in tourism, sports and banking, the kingdom does not shy away from showing off with the Grand Prix races, or celebrity visitors the likes of Kim Kardashian. This alone, makes the Kingdom look like a miracle of some sort to many who associate the Middle East with subsequent failures, instability and conflict.

However, what does not make international headlines anymore is a resilient and defiant social movement and creative forms of civil disobedience challenging the kingdom's legitimacy and holding it accountable to its human rights violations.

For decades, but especially since the uprising of 2011, Bahrain housed a call for democracy and fundamental rights, which consequently led to thousands of people jailed and tortured - some even to death. Many continue to be jailed for merely advocating for democracy and fundamental rights. Two things Western democracies have ample support for in theory but not so much in practice, especially outside their borders. The US, and UK, and many other EU states, are the biggest enablers of Bahrain in arms and trade.

But so called Western democracies are not Bahrain's only supporters. In June 2016, UN Women accepted money from the Bahrain royal family to launch the HRH Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Global Award for Women Empowerment, despite the fact that Bahrain continues to systematically target women human rights defenders who are at the forefront of a committed struggle for fundamental rights and justice.

Read more:

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/semanur-karaman/visionary-defiant-and-res b 12523172.html>

Saudi Arabia – Thousands of Saudis Sign Petition to End Male Guardianship of Women

Protest movement seeks to end Saudi Arabia law requiring women have permission of a male guardian to travel, marry or do other fundamental tasks



Thousands of Saudis have signed an online petition calling for the government to abolish the country's guardianship system, which prevents women from engaging in fundamental tasks without the permission of a male relative.

“Women should be treated as a full citizen,” said activist Aziza Al-Yousef who, along with other activists, has been fighting against the guardianship system for a decade.

“This is not only a women's issue, this is also putting pressure on normal men ... this is not an issue for women only,” she told the Guardian.

Under Saudi law, women require the permission of a male guardian to travel, marry, or exit prison and it may be needed to be granted employment or access to healthcare.

A guardian is typically a woman's father or her husband if she is married; a widow may have to seek permission from her son if she has no other men of age in her life.

Read more:

<http://www.wunrn.com/2016/10/saudi-arabia-thousands-of-saudis-sign-petition-to-end-male-guardianship-of-women/>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Women's lib, Syrian style: ISIS victims burn their hated niqabs on the street and joyfully reveal their faces in public



ISIS victims burn their hated niqabs on the street and joyfully reveal their faces in public for the first time in two years after Muslim fanatics are forced out of city of Manbij by US-backed fighters

Syrians have been pictured celebrating after they were liberated from ISIS rule in a northern stronghold in the country.

A woman was seen smiling in Manbij as she burned a niqab she was forced to wear by the Islamic State regime while another man could not stop beaming as he had his beard cut.

The outpour of emotion came after the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an Arab-Kurdish force backed by the US, expelled most of the terror group's troops from the town last week.

As the ISIS fighters left the town, they packed the civilians into cars to prevent the SDF from attacking them.

ISIS, which previously held the city for two-and-a-half years since seizing it in January 2014, took around 2,000 civilians to use as 'human shields' as they fled.

Read more:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3736518/Freedom-Syrian-woman-sets-fire-niqab-forced-wear-ISIS-rule-district-Aleppo-liberated-western-backed-fighters.html#ixzz4NNBXFuoZ>

ISIS Soldiers in Iraq Prison Talk of Murderous Ideology, Captured Yazidi Girls



The black bushy beard that makes Islamic State fighters look like oversized bullies is gone. So is the Darth Vader paraphernalia they wear as they swagger down the streets of captured cities like Mosul. Here in the Adult Reform Prison in Duhoc, Iraqi Kurdistan, Muhamed Mahmoud's face is boyish and clean shaven. He's 20 years old and looks for all the world like a kid studying hotel management.

Like many ISIS recruits, he ran away from what he saw as a failed life in Mosul in June 2014 and joined Islamic State, commonly known as ISIS, because "they were all my friends." He says the goal of ISIS is to "rule the whole world, to fly their flag everywhere and rule everyone by the Koran."

His prison mate, Luqman Salih Mohammed, 29, says, "They want to kill employees of governments and rich people and people who are not Muslim."

Mahmoud's job was to arrange for the captured girls, Yazidi women mostly and preferably young pretty girls with blue eyes, to be given to the fighters. "Fighters had the right to any girl they wanted. The leaders could have four girls each. We kept the girls in a prison and asked the fighters to come and choose one for themselves."

Read more:

<http://www.macleans.ca/news/world/the-real-faces-of-isis-sally-armstrong-reports-from-iraq/>

Turkish child marriage film shines light on hidden abuses

"These women have somehow managed to go on with their lives but you can see the pain on their faces."

Child brides in Turkey are often raped, beaten and forced to undergo virginity tests, according to the director of a new documentary which aims to break the silence on the taboo issue.

"Growing Up Married", which will premiere in London on Oct. 30, examines the impact of child marriage on four women who were wed as teenagers in western Turkey.

"When hearing some of their stories I thought to myself 'how are you still alive?'," filmmaker Eylem Atakav said in an interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Globally, one third of girls in developing countries, excluding China, are married before the age of 18 and one in nine before the age of 15, according to U.N. data.

Child marriage robs girls of their childhood and education and increases the risk of domestic violence and sexual abuse, campaigners say. It also puts them in danger of death or serious injury if they have children before their bodies are ready.

"There are lots of stories about child brides, but very few that look at what happens to them after," said Atakav, a lecturer in film and television studies at the University of East Anglia in Britain.

Read more:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20161015070242-13tk2>

World is failing former Yazidi sex slaves - Amnesty International

Gang-raped, tortured, deprived of food and traded among militants during their imprisonment, they need counseling, medical treatment and financial help that they are not getting

Yazidi women and girls who survived being held as sex slaves by Islamic State urgently need better care and support to recover from the horrific abuse they suffered in captivity, which has led some to attempt suicide, Amnesty International said on Monday.

Gang-raped, tortured, deprived of food and traded among militants during their imprisonment, they need counseling, medical treatment and financial help that they are not getting, it said.

Islamic State (IS) militants, who control a swathe of Iraq and Syria, have killed or enslaved thousands of Yazidis since overrunning the town of Sinjar in northern Iraq in August 2014. Young girls were taken as sex slaves, while boys were trained as fighters.

One Yazidi woman, abducted with five of her children, said her 13-year-old daughter set herself on fire following her release and died three days later, according to Amnesty researchers who visited the Kurdish region of Iraq in August.

"She said she could not take it any more. She was in pain all the time, she cried all the time," her mother was quoted as saying in Amnesty's report.

The family had repeatedly asked for the daughter to get specialized therapy abroad, the mother said.

Read more:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20161010000347-8e6yy>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

The Islamic State's Problem With Women

It is telling that women feature heavily in the Islamic State's rise and fall. While ISIS's craven massacre of Yazidi women in Iraq and Syria helped put it on the map, its gradual downfall is coming partly at the hands of Kurdish women fighting against it on the front lines.

It is easy to see a simple revenge story in this progression, but a deeper reading points to the fundamental role of women in ISIS's ideology, and their future role in its denouement.

When ISIS captured territory in 2014 to establish its self-proclaimed caliphate, it wanted to stage a spectacle that the world would be unable to ignore. So it resorted to the mass abduction, murder, rape, and enslavement of women, especially among the minority Yazidis. ISIS's brutality against its female captives was intended to humiliate the enemy and send a warning to anyone who did not adhere to its extremist, radical interpretation of Islam.

In January and February 2016, Human Rights Watch interviewed 15 Yazidi women and girls and 21 Sunni Muslim Arab women who managed to escape from ISIS. Most of them spent more than a year in captivity, and say they were forced to convert to Islam (if they weren't Muslims), enslaved, systematically raped – sometimes by multiple jihadist militants – and bought and sold.

These women's tragic stories suggest that the ISIS pseudo-state was built on the total subjugation of women, and the group has indeed frequently crafted brutal, misogynistic propaganda to express and promote its ideology.

Read more:

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/islamic-state-misogyny-weakness-by-fatima-sadiqi-2016-09>

Egypt's independent human rights community at risk of complete eradication



The undersigned organisations condemn unreservedly the asset freeze ruled on Saturday 17 September by the Cairo Criminal Court in Zeinohm on prominent human rights organisations and defenders in Egypt, as part of case no 173/2011, known as the “foreign funding case”.

Prominent human rights organisations and human rights defenders were particularly targeted: the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and its director Bahey el din Hassan, the Hisham Mubarak Law Center (HMLC) and its director Mostafa El Hassan, the Center for the Right to Education and its executive director Abdel Hafiz Tayel, as well as human rights defenders Hossam Bahgat and Gamal Eid.

The personal assets of the five human rights defenders are frozen and three NGOs CIHRS, HMLC and the Center for the Right to Education, are losing access to their bank accounts and their properties. The management of these NGOs' finances and programmes are to be handed over to government officials, giving them control their activities and full access to their records and database, including files related to victims of human rights violations.

Read more:

<https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/egypt-s-independent-human-rights-community-at-risk-of-complete>

Threats drive out beauty pageant in Upper Egypt



Fatma Bakr (center), organizer of the Miss Upper Egypt beauty pageant, is seen in a group photo with some of the would-be participants in the canceled competition.

What would have been Upper Egypt's first beauty pageant stirred a hornet's nest of controversy this month, outraging local conservatives who said it would spread debauchery and was unsuited to the region's traditions.

The pageant was scheduled for Oct. 10 in Assiut governorate, where a large gathering of celebrities, fashion designers, beauticians and public figures were expected. Yet the event was canceled that day when hotel officials said organizers hadn't received proper security clearance — meaning police would not be present in the event of demonstrations.

Given that the organizer received a death threat and warnings that her workplace and the hotel would be set on fire, security was a serious concern. She and the judges were also assailed and threatened on social media.

Assiut governorate, 320 kilometers (200 miles) south of Cairo, is known for its fundamentalist ideas about religion and gender. Women there are often viewed as religious conservatives who all wear black cloaks and veils (hijab) and are less educated than women in Cairo and coastal cities.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/10/egypt-beauty-pageant-upper-threat.html#ixzz4NMnkZZif>

Ban Ki-moon troubled by lack of progress on human rights in Iran



The UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, has given a damning assessment of human rights in Iran, highlighting the “alarming rate” of executions and saying little progress has been made under president Hassan Rouhani.

In spite of his achievements on the international front, most notably reaching last year’s landmark nuclear deal, Rouhani’s promises of domestic improvements have stalled in the face of resistance from hardliners.

Ban’s 19-page report, released this week, says he remains “deeply troubled” by accounts “of executions, floggings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, unfair trials, denial of access to medical care and possible torture and ill-treatment”.

It adds: “He is also concerned about continued restrictions of public freedoms and the related persecution of civil society actors, the persistence of discrimination against women and minorities and conditions of detention.”

Rights violations in Iran are largely carried out by a hardline judiciary and an intelligence apparatus that acts independently of Rouhani’s government.

Read more:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/04/ban-ki-moon-troubled-by-lack-of-progress-human-rights-iran>

RESOURCES & CALLS BOOKS & REPORTS

Culture and religious beliefs in relation to reproductive health

An increasing number of contemporary research publications acknowledge the influence of religion and culture on sexual and reproductive behavior and health-care utilization. It is currently hypothesized that religious influences can partly explain disparities in sexual and reproductive health outcomes. In this paper, we will pay particular attention to Muslims in sexual and reproductive health care. This review reveals that knowledge about devout Muslims’ own experience of sexual and reproductive health-care matters is limited, thus providing weak evidence for modeling of efficient practical guidelines for sexual and reproductive health care directed at Muslim patients.

Successful outcomes in sexual and reproductive health of Muslims require both researchers and practitioners to acknowledge religious heterogeneity and variability, and individuals’ possibilities to negotiate Islamic edicts. Failure to do so could lead to inadequate health-care provision and, in the worst case, to suboptimal encounters between migrants with Muslim background and the health-care providers in the receiving country.

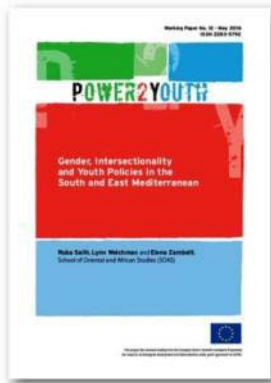
In this chapter, we will offer a review of theoretical and practical dimensions of sexual and reproductive health-care delivery within a health-care system characterized by an increased religious and cultural diversity. Read more:

[http://www.bestpracticeobgyn.com/article/S1521-6934\(15\)00155-8/fulltext](http://www.bestpracticeobgyn.com/article/S1521-6934(15)00155-8/fulltext)

For a direct link to paper:

[http://www.bestpracticeobgyn.com/article/S1521-6934\(15\)00155-8/pdf](http://www.bestpracticeobgyn.com/article/S1521-6934(15)00155-8/pdf)

Gender, Intersectionality & Youth Policies in the South & East Mediterranean



This document contains a discussion of the main findings, gaps and challenges emerging from the country reports prepared by Power2Youth (P2Y) partners in specific regard to issues of gender mainstreaming and gender analysis.

After a brief overview of the key principles of intersectional analysis, we undertake a discussion of some general themes and issues that cut across all or most of the country reports produced by P2Y partners.²

In the third part of this document, we apply our analysis down to each of the four distinct domains of public action selected for macro-level analysis: employment, family, migration and spatial planning policies.

For a direct link to report:

http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/p2y_12.pdf

World Social Science Report 2016 – Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World

This Report examines the harmful impact of inequalities on citizens, communities and countries.

While there was a fivefold increase in studies of inequalities and social justice in academic publications from 1992 to 2013, the report explains that many of them pay too little attention to inequalities that go beyond income and wealth – such as health, education and **gender** according to the report.

It identifies seven intersecting dimensions of inequality: economic, political, social, cultural, environmental, spatial, and knowledge-based.

Read more:

<http://www.wunrn.com/2016/10/world-social-science-report-2016-challenging-inequalities-pathways-to-a-just-world/>

For a direct link to report:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002458/245825e.pdf>

Gendering Documentation: A manual for & about Women Human Rights Defenders



A publication of the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition, this manual is motivated by the courageous activism of people—and in particular, women—around the world who dare to resist, to fight for what we believe is right, and to put our lives on the line for justice, accountability and fairness.

Gendering Documentation frames and encourages documentation as a politically-motivated telling of women human rights defenders' stories. Documentation of WHRDs' experiences is a thread between our acts of resistance and the abuses we face.

The chapters that follow go beyond existing human rights documentation manuals to provide a unique tool for capturing the specific nature of violations against WHRDs. The discussions that follow are grounded in a gender analysis that both challenges the social systems that restrict women's rights, and also supports those who fight for those rights all over the world.

Read more:

<http://www.wunrn.com/2016/10/manual-for-about-women-human-rights-defenders-gendering-documentation-2/>

For a direct link to report:

<http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/GENDERING-DOCUMENTATION-FINAL-3-min.pdf>

Bahrain: domestic workers freedom of religion and worship rights



The Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) and Bahrain Interfaith condemn the government of Bahrain's disregard for the growing abuse against female domestic workers in the Kingdom. We call on the governments of Bahrain and of labor-sending countries to ensure religious freedom rights are protected.

This report traces abuse and exploitation to which female domestic workers in Bahrain are subjected by employers, with regards to their rights of worship. The report outlines the rights and international legal standards that apply to workers.

Approximately 460,000 migrant workers, mostly from Asia, make up 77 percent of the country's private workforce. Due to shortcomings in Bahrain's legal and regulatory framework and the failure to implement and enforce existing laws, migrant workers, especially female domestic workers, endure serious abuses such as unpaid wages, passport confiscation, unsafe and unhealthy accommodation, excessive work hours, and physical and psychological abuse. They are also being subjected to deprivation of their rights to worship and the absence of religious freedoms.

Read more:

<http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/8139>

UNICEF: Girls worldwide spend 160M more hours per day on chores than boys

The report came in anticipation of the International Day of the Girl, Oct. 11.



Girls worldwide spend an estimated 160 million more hours per day than boys on household chores, a UNICEF report issued Friday said. Released in advance of the United Nations' International Day of the Girl, Oct. 11, it said girls age 5 to 14 spend 40 percent more time than boys engaged in unpaid activities including gathering firewood, collecting water, caring for family members and other tasks.

The report is the first global attempt to quantify the amount of domestic work done by girls, and is part of the United Nations' "Harnessing the Power of Data for Girls: Taking stock and looking ahead to 2030" project.

The data indicate girls between ages 5 and 9 spend 30 percent more time than boys on household domestic duties, and the disparity grows as children get older.

Read more:

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2016/10/07/UNICEF-Girls-worldwide-spend-160M-more-hours-per-day-on-chores-than-boys/7451475839461/

For a direct link to report:

<https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Harnessing-the-Power-of-Data-for-Girls-Brochure-2016-1-1.pdf>

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