

Issue #157

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NEWS & ARTICLES
GENDER ACTIVISM

Turkey election: Kurds, women, gays put faith in upstart party

Record number of women elected to Turkish parliament

Politicizing Self-Care and Wellbeing in Our Activism as Women Human Rights Defenders

Turkey – First Yazidi Woman Candidate for the Turkish Parliament

In Iran, Woman Motocross Racer Jumps Barriers

How tobacco is enabling women in southern Lebanon

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Isis Slave Markets Sell Girls For “As Little As A Pack Of Cigarettes”, UN Envoy Says

The phone app challenging violence against women in a Mumbai slum

The UK's missing girls: preventing online radicalization

Climate Change is Forcing Bangladeshi Girls into Child Marriage

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Top US court rules for Muslim woman denied Abercrombie job over hijab

Dutch Cabinet Backs Partial Islamic Burqa Ban

Saudi Religious Police Berate Gloveless Woman

Turkey – Constitutional Court Rules That Civil Marriage Is No Longer A Legal Requirement For Religiously Married Citizens

Leader Says Mideast Pays Price for Gender Gap

Women Still Earn a Lot Less Than Men

Turkey – Low Female Participation in Workforce – Issues of Education, Informal Work, Low Wages, Roles – Statistics

Iran - Fewer Young Iranians Are Getting Married

RESOURCES & CALLS
BOOKS & REPORTS

New Book about Male Maternity

Study Sees Success in Training Women to Prevent Rape

Marriage Contract – In Harmony with Muslim & Canadian Family Laws

Women's Work Counts
Feminist Arguments for Human Rights at Work

Morocco - Over 62% of Moroccan Women Are Victims of Gender-Based Violence – Study

Pay equity: participatory gender pay gap survey

Egypt uses sexual violence as a tool of repression: Report

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Turkey election: Kurds, women, gays put faith in upstart party

For years it has been their ritual - women who lost children and husbands in 30 years of armed conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish state. I meet them in Diyarbakir - the final stop of our election trip across Turkey. Age and exhaustion are etched on their faces. One wears a necklace with a picture of her missing children. Another has a bracelet bearing the Kurdish flag. "Turkey doesn't think we Kurds are humans", says Sakine Arat, 80, who lost four sons and one daughter in the fighting. "We've tried all the political parties but none sided with us. Now we've found one - the HDP - that treats us as equals. So we will vote for it." The People's Democratic Party (HDP) is the one to watch in Turkey's election on Sunday. Its roots and support base are Kurdish but it has broadened out, becoming a powerful voice of the Turkish left.

'Drown Erdogan'

Its candidates used to run as independents, winning a handful of seats. But this time, the HDP is a single, united party - and polls show it could cross the 10% threshold to get into parliament, potentially gaining dozens of MPs and depriving Turkey's governing AKP of a majority.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/turkey-election-kurds-women-gays-put-faith-upstart-party>

Record number of women elected to Turkish parliament

Dilek Öcalan, niece of jailed PKK founder Abdullah Öcalan, among 96 women who won seats in Grand National Assembly



Dilek Öcalan, niece of Abdullah Öcalan, the jailed founder of the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK), is one of a record number of female MPs entering the Turkish parliament.

A total of 96 women won seats in Turkey's Grand National Assembly in Sunday's elections, bringing the proportion of female deputies to a historic high of 17%, compared with 14% after the 2011 elections.

Abdullah Öcalan is serving a life sentence for his role as one of the founders of the Kurdish separatist PKK, which in the 1980s was involved in armed conflict in which an estimated 40,000 people died.

Dilek Öcalan, 28, of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic party (HDP), was elected in Şanlıurfa, in the country's south near the Syrian border.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/record-number-women-elected-turkish-parliament>

Politicizing Self-Care and Wellbeing in Our Activism as Women Human Rights Defenders



Stress, burn out, uncontrollable emotional outbursts, depression, anxiety, migraines and cancer, are some of the effects that human rights defense work has on WHRDs around the world, and the ones that often make them quit their important work. AWID spoke with Jessica Horn, Senior Advisor for the African Institute for Integrated Responses to Violence Against Women and HIV/AIDS (AIR) about the politics of self-care and well being for women human rights defenders (WHRDs).*

AWID: Based on your experience, can you tell us about the political importance of wellbeing and self-care in the lives of WHRDs? What is striking about that in your view?

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/politicizing-self-care-and-wellbeing-our-activism-women-human-rights-defenders>

Turkey – First Yazidi Woman Candidate for the Turkish Parliament



Feleknas Uca speaks at a campaign event in Diyarbakir

"A political action movie" is how Feleknas Uca, 38, describes politics in Turkish parliament, referring to macho behavior and physical fights that sometimes break out. She thinks it will be difficult for her to adjust to it, after having served two terms, from 1999 to 2009, in the European Parliament in Brussels. "In Europe," Uca said, "you are respected for your opinion. In Turkey, politics are carried out undemocratically." Still, she is eager to start working in the Turkish parliament after the June 7 general elections. If her party, the People's Democracy Party (HDP), a leftist party with roots in the Kurdish political movement, manages to exceed the 10% threshold, she will for sure occupy one of the orange seats in the "meclis."

Read more:

http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/05/turkey-kurds-yezidi-mp-candidate-wants-to-strive-for-peace.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm_campaign=8435405a08-May_06_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-8435405a08-102417357

Woman Motocross Racer Jumps Barriers



Iranian motocross rider Behnaz Shafiei's passion for hurdling over dirt hills has led her to leap cultural and legal barriers in Iran, where women are banned from riding motorcycles in public.

"When two days pass and I do not ride my motorcycle, I get really ill. Even the thought of not having a motorcycle someday gives me an awful feeling," Shafiei said on the outskirts of Iran's capital, Tehran. "Sometimes, I think to myself, 'How did people in the past live without a motorbike?' Is life without a motorcycle possible?"

It almost became a reality for 26-year-old. In Iran it remains illegal for women to ride motorcycles in public. Conservative clerics also denounce the idea of women attending men's sporting events.

But Shafiei and five other women worked hard to get official identifications from Iran's Motorcycle and Automobile Federation to allow them to race on amateur tracks. They still don't have access to Iran's only standard motocross track at the Azadi Sports Complex in Tehran, so they often race on the capital's outskirts.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/181753-in-iran-woman-motocross-racer-jumps-barriers>

How tobacco is enabling women in southern Lebanon

"It fertilized the soil, protected our honor and guaranteed the loans." These are the words Hajji Naameh used to describe the tobacco plant. In her opinion, in addition to fertilizing the soil and insuring bank loans, tobacco plants have helped women gain an income without having to work for other people, mainly as housemaids. That's why she says tobacco has protected the honor of women in the south of Lebanon. From Houla, at 55 Hajji is a highly-respected figure in the tobacco business of southern Lebanon. She says tobacco has become the main business propping up the economic balance in the villages of the south.

Prior to 2000, the economy of southern Lebanon was characterized by activities directly related to the Israeli occupation, such as employment in Israel, enrollment in the "South Lebanon Army" militia (SLA), and economic supplements of the Israeli military presence. UNIFIL's presence also brought money to the region, as did financial allowances granted to the children and families of resistance soldiers. But the majority of these sources have dried up since the Israeli withdrawal. According to the Lebanese government's Conference on the Reconstruction of the Liberated Territories and the Adjacent Areas, "Southern Lebanon is primarily an agricultural region with around 28% of the surface occupied by agriculture. Owner-operated farms are predominant, constituting more than 76% of all agricultural exploitations. Tobacco cultivation, which is largely subsidized by the State, plays a crucial role in the economy of the region."

Read more:

<https://now.mmediame.lb/en/reportsfeatures/565405-how-tobacco-is-enabling-women-in-southern-lebanon>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Isis Slave Markets Sell Girls For “As Little As A Pack Of Cigarettes”, UN Envoy Says



UN envoy on sexual violence says abducting girls has become a key part of Isis strategy to recruit foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria over the past 18 months

Teenage girls abducted by Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria are being sold in slave markets “for as little as a pack of cigarettes”, the UN envoy on sexual violence said on Monday.

Zainab Bangura visited Iraq and Syria in April, and has since been working on an action plan to address the horrific sexual violence being waged by Isis fighters.

“This is a war that is being fought on the bodies of women,” Bangura said.

The UN envoy spoke to women and girls who had escaped from captivity in Isis-controlled areas, met with local religious and political leaders and visited refugees in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

Read more:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/09/isis-slave-markets-sell-girls-for-as-little-as-a-pack-of-cigarettes-un-envoy-says#img-1>

The phone app challenging violence against women in a Mumbai slum



A female potter carries earthen pots through traditional pottery kilns in the Mumbai slum of Dharavi.

Bhanuben lets out a throaty laugh when asked if the men of Dharavi are scared of her and her team. “Not yet ... but they are a tad wary of us these days,” says the 42-year-old community worker for SNEHA (Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action), a Mumbai-based NGO.

Mumbai’s Dharavi slum is home to anywhere between 300,000 and 1 million people. Bhanuben was born and brought up here and knows the place like the back of her hand, and the challenges of surviving in this “teeming slum of 1 million souls”.

“There is a high incidence of gender violence here, but I have been lucky,” says Bhanuben, a mother of two sons, adding: “My husband is a good man.”

Read more:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jun/02/phone-app-challenging-violence-against-women-mumbai-slum-dharavi>

The UK's missing girls: preventing online radicalization

Less than 4% of Muslim mothers who attended a programme in Britain to equip them with basic IT skills knew who ISIS were. Education is key to enabling them to prevent the online radicalization of their children.

It is becoming increasingly evident that, in the words of the former Conservative party chair, Lady Warsi, Britain is “fighting an ever-losing battle” to prevent extremists from radicalizing people online.

While police are trying urgently to locate missing Shamima Begum, 15, Kadiza Sultana, 16, and Amira Abase, 15, who have believed to have crossed the border into Syria in Al Raqqa, ISIS continue to have success using the internet and social media platforms for their own propaganda and recruitment.

It emerged that a Twitter account linked to Begum shows that she contacted Aqsa Mahmood, a prominent online advocate and recruiter of ISIS, just two days before leaving her East London home and travelling to Turkey with her two school friends.

Read more:

https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk%27s-missing-girls?utm_source=50.50+list&utm_campaign=ead213da3f-RSS_5050_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_89d6c8b9eb-ead213da3f-407822177

Climate Change is Forcing Bangladeshi Girls into Child Marriage

Sanjita had very little to say on the subject of how she felt about getting married. Maybe that's because she's 10 years old. She had married 18 days earlier, to a boy who is 14 or 15 years old—he works in a garment factory in Dhaka and as a rickshaw driver.

Her mother Mariam (this and Sanjita's name are pseudonyms) had quite a bit to say:

I don't have any sons who look after my husband and I. We're getting old and fall sick all the time. My husband says 'I can die anytime—before I die I want to make sure I carry out my duty to my daughter.'

It's illegal in Bangladesh for girls to marry before the age of 18, and parents and others who arrange such marriages can face criminal penalties, but Mariam told me, “We're not very educated so we don't understand those laws.”

It's not surprising that Sanjita's parents don't understand the law well—it's almost entirely unenforced. After interviewing dozens of married girls, many of them married at ages as young as 10, 11 or 12, their families and community leaders in regions across Bangladesh, I couldn't find a single case of someone being arrested for arranging the marriage of a child.

Read more:

<http://www.wlumf.org/news/climate-change-forcing-bangladeshi-girls-child-marriage>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Top US court rules for Muslim woman denied Abercrombie job over hijab

Supreme Court votes 8-1 in favor of Samantha Elauf, but company tells the Guardian the ruling 'did not determine that A&F discriminated against MsElauf'



Samantha Elauf, who was denied a sales job in 2008 at an Abercrombie Kids store in Tulsa, Oklahoma

The US Supreme Court on Monday ruled in favor of Samantha Elauf, a Muslim woman who was denied a job at an Abercrombie & Fitch clothing store in Oklahoma because she wore a headscarf for religious reasons.

The justices decided the case, which united Christian, Muslim and Jewish and other religious organizations, with an 8-1 vote, ruling in favor of the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which sued the company on behalf of Elauf.

Read more:

<http://www.theguardian.com/law/2015/jun/01/supreme-court-rules-favor-muslim-woman-hijab-bercrombie-fitch>

Dutch Cabinet Backs Partial Islamic Burqa Ban



The Dutch cabinet on Friday approved a partial ban on wearing the face-covering Islamic veil, including in schools, hospitals and on public transport.

"Face-covering clothing will in future not be accepted in education and healthcare institutions, government buildings and on public transport," the government said in a statement after the cabinet backed Interior Minister Ronald Plasterk's bill.

The ban does not apply to wearing the burqa on the street, but only "in specific situations where it is essential for people to be seen" or for security reasons, Prime Minister Mark Rutte told journalists after the cabinet meeting.

"The bill does not have any religious background," Rutte said.

The government said it had "tried to find a balance between people's freedom to wear the clothes they want and the importance of mutual and recognizable communication."

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/179785-dutch-cabinet-backs-partial-islamic-burqa-ban>

Saudi Religious Police Berate Gloveless Woman



A video of a Saudi religious policeman shouting at a veiled woman and barring her from entering a shop for not wearing gloves has gone viral on the Internet.

The religious police, known as the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, is notorious for imposing Saudi Arabia's strict version of Islam.

Commission members enforce the segregation of the sexes and have traditionally forced women to cover from head to toe when in public. But they are often accused of abuses.

The woman that appears in the video is seen covered in the traditional Saudi black abaya cloak, with only her bare hands showing.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/180051-saudi-religious-police-berate-gloveless-woman>

Turkey – Constitutional Court Rules That Civil Marriage Is No Longer A Legal Requirement For Religiously Married Citizens – Serious Concerns For Legal Protection Of Married Turkish Women



Bride Mutlu and groom Ihsan Baran pose for a photo in front of the New Mosque at Eminonu Square, Istanbul

Turkey's Constitutional Court announced May 29 that civil marriage is no longer a legal requirement for religiously married citizens, a decision that will have serious social implications. Many critics, especially women, fret that the ruling will pave the way for more violations of women's and children's rights. The court based its decision on a case from 2014, when a criminal court in the Turkish province of Erzurum appealed a case to the Constitutional Court involving a religiously married couple without a civil marriage and the imam who carried out the ceremony.

Prior to this latest decision, Paragraph 5 of Article 230 of the Turkish Criminal Code dictated a sentence of two to six months in prison for individuals who lived together after a religious wedding without a civil marriage. In the same article, Paragraph 6 also gave two to six months' imprisonment to an individual (typically an imam) who carried out a religious wedding ceremony without verifying a civil marriage with official documents.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/06_15/06_01_15/06_0115_turkey.htm

Leader Says Mideast Pays Price for Gender Gap



Bring more Arab women into the workforce, invest in "bite-sized" infrastructure projects and get the private sector more involved in training young job seekers — these are the prescriptions of a leading Gulf entrepreneur for growing Middle Eastern economies and combating rampant youth unemployment.

Decision-makers long seemed paralyzed by the sheer size of the troubled region's economic problems, but attitudes have changed in recent years, said Omar Kutayba Alghanim, co-chairman of this week's regional World Economic Forum conference and a leader of private sector efforts to tackle youth unemployment.

"When you talk to government officials about this, they are a lot more turned on to these issues, and I think they acknowledge the size and significance of these issues," Alghanim told The Associated Press on Friday. "As compared to five years ago, I see a lot more attention — which is great."

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/179844-leader-says-mideast-pays-price-for-gender-gap>

Women Still Earn a Lot Less than Men



Tuesday is Equal Pay Day, the day selected each year by the National Committee on Pay Equity, a coalition of women's, civil rights and labor groups, to draw attention to how much longer women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year. In 1963, when President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act, a woman working full time year-round typically made 59 cents for every dollar paid to her male counterpart. By 2013, the latest year of available census data, it was 78 cents on the dollar. Another measure of the wage gap, computed by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, shows that, in 2014, the ratio of female-to-male weekly earnings was 82.5 percent.

While that seems like steady if painful slow progress, closer inspection shows that progress in closing the gender pay gap has basically stalled over the past decade. The longer the gap persists, the less it can be explained away by factors other than discrimination.

Read more:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/14/opinion/women-still-earn-a-lot-less-than-men.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&r=1>

Turkey – Low Female Participation in Workforce – Issues of Education, Informal Work, Low Wages, Roles – Statistics



When it comes to the participation of women in Turkey's workforce, the picture is not very encouraging. According to a March 2015 report from the Turkish Statistical Institute, women make up only 30% of Turkey's labor force.

Additionally, in a country where informal work among women is prevalent, many other factors contribute to the gloomy statistics, including gendered division of labor, lack of education and a social security system that does not function in women's favor.

Furthermore, employers often prevent women from returning to work after having children, thus further preventing them from contributing to Turkey's economy.

Unfortunately, testimonies and studies from around the world, including from the United Kingdom and the United States, confirm a similar pattern: Women are being driven from their jobs, as motherhood results in continuous "disadvantages in the workplace in addition to those commonly associated with gender," as stated by a 2007 American Journal of Sociology article.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/05/turkey-new-foundation-helps-turkish-mothers-return-workforce.html#ixzz3cw2NqGKz>

Iran - Fewer Young Iranians Are Getting Married



An Iranian couple sit on the bank of the Zayanderood River, in the historic city of Esfahan

June 2, 2015 – Tehran - Despite Iranian leaders' desire to increase the marriage rate and population, the latest statistics published by the National Organization for Civil Registration and the Ministry of Youth and Sports indicate that men and women have less interest in getting married while the divorce rate has risen. Ali Akbar Mahzoon, chairman of the Information and Statistics Department of the National Organization for Civil Registration, said in an interview May 6 with Mehr News Agency that Iran has more than 11 million unmarried youths in marriage age range. In Iran, the customary marriage age range is 20-34 for men and 15-29 for women. According to the information provided by Mahzoon, 46% of men and 48% of women in those age ranges remain unmarried.

Read more:

http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/06/iran-birth-rate-marriage-decline-divorce.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm_campaign=fc19adc49b-June 03 2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-fc19adc49b-102417357

RESOURCES & CALLS
BOOKS & REPORTS

New Book about Male Maternity

Professor Juan Carlos Suarez Villegas' book "The male Maternity" presents an interesting, original and unique interpretation of "male maternity". Spanish, Italian and English versions are already available. It is published by Il Sextante, an Italian publishing house based in Trento.

What does Professor Villegas mean by "male maternity"? In a nutshell, both father and mother have to develop maternal attitudes and ways of behaving in children's upbringing; their commitment towards their children has to follow similar paths.

So "male maternity" means practically a common attitude of availability, a feeling towards children that is similar to that of a nurturing mother and a spending of equal amounts of time to upbringing. This commitment has been viewed as female values, especially in the past, but in reality they are equally rooted in human nature -irrespective of the gender of a person.

Read more:

<http://wideplus.org/new-book-about-male-maternity-review-by-caterina-dominici-newsletter-may-2015/>

Study Sees Success in Training Women to Prevent Rape



A program that teaches university-age women how to avoid rape has shown some success in reducing the numbers of women in Canada who are sexually assaulted, said a study Wednesday.

Previous research has suggested that as many as one in four young women are raped or are victims of attempted rape while attending college.

The findings published in the New England Journal of Medicine are based on a group of nearly 900 women at three Canadian universities.

The first-year students were randomly assigned to either look at brochures on avoiding campus rape or to complete the training course.

During four separate three-hour sessions, the women learn "information, skills and practices to assess risk from acquaintances, to overcome emotional barriers in acknowledging danger and to engage in effective verbal and physical self-defense," the study said.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/181723-study-sees-success-in-training-women-to-prevent-rape>

Marriage Contract – In Harmony with Muslim & Canadian Family Laws

During the No Religious Arbitration debate, we came across some women wishing to deal with family matters in accordance with the traditions of their faith. Realizing the need, CCMW published this kit which allows women to develop a marriage contract in keeping with Muslim and Canadian family laws.

Rooted in traditional Muslim laws, the sample contract incorporates rights guaranteed to women under Canadian laws, & suggests ways to increase equality between husband and wife.

The kit is the result of 6 years of deliberation. It has been researched & developed by Professor Lynda Clarke, a respected Islamic scholar. We also drew upon the expertise of Pam Cross, a feminist lawyer who has worked on women's equality issues for many years.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/05_15/05_25_15/05_2515_canada.htm

For a direct link to report:

<http://ccmw.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Muslim-Marriage-Contract-Toolkit-English.rev02-2014.pdf>

Women's Work Counts Feminist Arguments for Human Rights at Work

The feminist and human rights approaches discussed in this paper advocate a radical rethinking of work that begins with women's experience of work in their lives. The paper calls upon the need for identification of assumptions and values that are not respectful or sensitive to women's experience and needs of work, the examination of gender biases and inequalities that are present in institutions, structures, and actors that are critical to the operationalization and achievement of rights, the dismantling of the apparatus that supports the gender unequal/discriminatory operationalization of the rights including policies, institutions, systems and structures and practices that propagate these inequality. It brings to the fore critical issues that need to be addressed by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in order for the achievement of substantive equality and realization of women's right to work and their right to just and favorable conditions of work.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/06_15/06_01_15/06_0115_womens.htm

For a direct link to report:

http://www.pwescr.org/Women_Work_Counts_Feminist_Arguments_for_Human_Rights_at_Work-Radhik.pdf

Morocco - Over 62% of Moroccan Women Are Victims of Gender-Based Violence – Study



Around 62.8% of Moroccan women have suffered from gender violence, a new report has revealed.

A group of 38 women's groups presented a report on violence against women in Morocco last week in the capital Rabat.

The report, whose content has been reported by news website Hespess, has found that 55% of these women have suffered or are still suffering from domestic violence.

The report also addressed the issue of education of young girls in rural areas. The document has found that illiteracy is more widespread among girls than among young men in rural areas, with 47.6% against 25.5%, according to 2012 figures quoted by the collective.

Read more:

<http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2015/03/152882/62-moroccan-women-victims-gender-based-violence/>

Pay equity

ILO and Palestinian statistics office launch participatory gender pay gap survey activities

The ILO and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) are meeting with key stakeholders to build consensus and acquire local buy-in for a survey on the gender pay gap and discrimination at work in the occupied territory's education sector

The ILO and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) will hold a participatory one-day induction workshop with key stakeholders in the occupied Palestinian territory to build consensus and acquire local buy-in for a survey on the gender pay gap and discrimination at work in the occupied territory's education sector. The workshop will also serve to clarify the topic of pay equity, build a stronger local knowledge-base on gender pay equity in the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as share relevant global and regional experience.

Read more:

http://www.ilo.org/beirut/events/WCMS_373566/lang-en/index.htm

Egypt uses sexual violence as a tool of repression: Report

Egypt's women and opposition face unprecedented levels of state-sanctioned sexualized violence, despite President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi's promises to uphold Egyptian revolutionaries' calls for 'freedom', 'justice' and 'dignity' when he took over nearly two years ago.

According to a damning report published on Tuesday by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), sexual and gender-based violence used by state security forces, the police and military has been systematically on the rise as a weapon of repression since the military takeover of July 2013.

"The increase in the number of documented cases of sexual assault perpetrated by members of the security forces since the takeover of power by the armed forces on 3 July 2013 suggests a direct link between the security clampdown and the rise in sexual violence," says the report titled Exposing State Hypocrisy: Sexual Violence by Security Forces in Egypt.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/egypt-uses-sexual-violence-tool-repression-report>

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