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How this young Yazidi is bringing hope to IS victims

Pari Ibrahim, 27, was a regular law student in the Netherlands who had a job in a library until she received a phone call at 5 a.m. in August 2014 that would change her life forever. A family member from northern Iraq called to inform her that the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) had invaded Sinjar and had killed the men and kidnapped the women and children. "We are being massacred, we are heading for the mountains," the family member said.

Pari Ibrahim, a young Yazidi women living in the Netherlands, established the Free Yezidi Foundation to highlight the stories of victims of this Iraqi community at the hands of the Islamic State.

Ibrahim, who belongs to the Yazidi community, had fled Iraq with her parents in the 1990s and now lives in the Netherlands. After receiving the phone call, she frantically started searching the internet for information, but was not able to find news. Slowly it became clear what had happened in Sinjar. Thousands of Yazidi men had been killed or disappeared and 6,000 women and children had been enslaved by IS, including 19 females and 21 males who are Ibrahim's relatives.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/yazidi-foundation-iraq-europe-justice-isis-victims.html#ixzz4E7UXhoUQ>

Whitewashing Sharia councils in the UK?



In an Open Letter to the UK Home Secretary, hundreds of women's human rights organisations and campaigners warn against a further slide towards privatised justice and parallel legal systems.

In 2015, the UK government announced that it would hold an independent inquiry into the operation of Sharia Councils in the UK.

Predictably, some dismissed the move as yet another example of 'Muslim bashing' and 'Islamophobia' because it was located within the State's counter- extremism strategy.

But some of us welcomed the inquiry precisely because it provided a vital and rare opportunity for the state to examine the resurgence of religious fundamentalism and extremism within black and minority communities in the UK, and its impact on gender equality and justice.

Read more:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/pragna-patel-gita-sahgal/whitewashing-sharia-councils-in-uk>

Feminist propositions for a just economy: time for creative imaginations

Close your eyes and imagine the global economic systems of your dreams. One in which feminist theory and practice are integrated and concepts like market, growth, and profit are replaced with solidarity, sharing of resources and collective well being.

What needs to change?

The neoliberal model driving the global economy has consistently demonstrated its inability to address the root causes of poverty, inequalities, and exclusion. In fact, it has contributed to the creation and exacerbation of these injustices.

Where to start

We are not starting from zero, nor are we alone in this attempt to dream that another world is possible. Different experiences have been advanced, or exist in practice, within diverse communities challenging and resisting the mainstream market and growth-based economic systems.

The propositions

What if the value of goods and services was determined by communities that depend on them and not by profit logic and companies? What if human relationship, generation of goodwill, and attention to nurturing the whole society, and not just one's immediate self, were the norm?

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/feminist-propositions-just-economy-time-creative-imaginations>

Israel ultra-Orthodox women go hi-tech

Bright and airy, the workspace at Comax is much like other Israeli hi-tech firms, except that a rabbi has carefully vetted its design to allow ultra-Orthodox Jewish women to work there.



The company in Holon near Tel Aviv employs 20 ultra-Orthodox women, one of several to do so as increasingly more female breadwinners from Israel's religious community join the secular work force....

Graduates of programming schools in the overwhelmingly ultra-Orthodox community of Bnei Brak, about 10 kilometres (six miles) away, the Comax women produce most of the firm's computer programmes for large supermarkets in the vicinity.

The ultra-Orthodox -- known in Hebrew as haredi, or God-fearing -- make up an estimated 11 percent of the Israeli population.

They abide by a strictly religious and traditional lifestyle, and men often study religion instead of working.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/afp/2016/07/israel-judaism-technology-women.html#ixzz4EYbcI83y>

Myth-busting in defense of grassroots women crisis responders

False claims that deny the impact of grassroots women's crisis responses are diverting much needed resources away from the very people making the best use of them.

If your house was on fire, you wouldn't sit back and ponder whether hosing it down is the right option. You would do what works and douse those flames with water. Yet these days, governments are watching the gathering flames of entrenched humanitarian disasters and equivocating over whether water is really the best way to go.

There is a dangerous and misguided notion taking hold among states that are charged with funding and coordinating international humanitarian responses. More and more, they float the claim that there is insufficient proof of the effectiveness of grassroots women's interventions in crisis settings. This claim is not just demonstrably false, it also threatens to divert much-needed resources away from the very people making the best use of them.

In a crisis, women waste no time in putting our most effective solutions into action. When drought and famine gripped northern Kenya, local women organized as indispensable first responders, providing food and water to struggling families far from official refugee camps.

Read more:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/yifat-susskind/myth-busting-in-defense-of-grassroots-women-crisis-responders>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Over 350 Yazidi women freed from Daesh in Fallujah



Iraqi forces have managed to rescue 354 Yazidi women from the Daesh in the recently-liberated city of Fallujah, an Yazidi official with Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) says.

"Iraqi forces involved in Fallujah's [liberation] operation have managed to free 354 Yazidi women, who were abducted by militants of Daesh organization after they took control of the Yazidi-majority Shingal (Sinjar) region in August 2014," Hadi Dubani, the director of Yazidi Affairs in the city of Dohuk, told the German news agency DPA on Sunday.

Dubani further said the women are now in al-Amiriyah area, south of Fallujah, "under the protection of Iraqi forces," adding Iraqi forces are arranging their return to the Kurdistan region.

Iraqi forces announced on June 17 that they had seized almost full control over the strategic city of Fallujah, which had been in the hands of Daesh for almost two and a half years.

Read more:

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/over-350-yazidi-women-freed-daesh-fallujah-854060>

Disembodying honour and exposing the politics behind it

The reaction to the public stripping of a Coptic grandmother in Upper Egypt reminds us of the power of popular campaigns to shame those who use embodied concepts of honour politically



On the 20 May 2016, Soad Thabet, a Coptic Egyptian seventy year old grandmother was forcibly taken from her home by a mob of men, stripped entirely of her clothes and paraded in her local village of Karam Abou Omair in Minya, Egypt

The act of stripping this Coptic woman in public was a chilling reminder of the act of stripping what infamously became known as the blue bra woman in Tahrir Square in December 2011. The drivers, dynamics and details of the two incidents are strikingly different, but they bear in common the elevation of these two women to iconic figures who, through their bodies laid bare, exposed the shame of the perpetrators and the powers which they represent.

Read more:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/mariz-tadros/disembodying-honour-and-exposing-politics-behind-it>

Germany approves tough "no means no" sex crime laws

Under new rules, all forms of non-consensual sexual contact will be punishable, regardless of circumstances.

The German parliament on Thursday unanimously approved tougher laws making any form of non-consensual sexual contact a crime, seeking to reassure a public shaken by mass attacks on women on New Year's Eve that were largely blamed on migrants.

The measures, dubbed "nein heisst nein" or "no means no" by the German media, aim to close loopholes that made it difficult to punish offenders if proof was lacking that they had used violence against their victims or when victims did not resist.

Under the new rules, all forms of non-consensual sexual contact will be punishable, regardless of the circumstances.

All 601 lawmakers participating in the debate voted in favour of the new measures.

In Cologne at New Year, hundreds of women said they were groped, attacked and robbed outside the train station. Police said the suspects were mainly of North African or Arab appearance.

The police chief was forced to resign over the incident, which hardened public opinion against the government's decision to allow in more than one million migrants last year, mostly people fleeing conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Read more:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160707110855-mjam9/?source=fiOtherNews3>

Women With Disabilities

Immigrant and refugee women with disabilities are those who are living with disabilities such as chronic disease, sensory disabilities including low vision and/or deaf/deafened/hard of hearing, mental health disabilities, developmental/intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, acquired brain injury, etc.

Ways of violence

The violence that immigrant and refugee women with disabilities face is based on the interaction of multiple forms of oppression: ableism, sexism, and racism, etc.

It can be very difficult for a disabled immigrant or refugee woman to leave a violent or abusive situation due to a fear of loss and lack of supports in the community. Because the person abusing her could be her caregiver, there could be a lot of fear: the fear of loss of services, access, relationship, being a burden, taking from the system, etc. There are not a lot of services (shelters, access to attendant care, sign language interpretation, etc.) that are accessible for disabled immigrant and refugee women – so the lack of supports could impact her ability to leave an abusive situation.

Support barriers

A look at the social services available for immigrants and refugees with disabilities reveals that few exist that support both their settlement and accessibility needs. There is a misconception that immigrants and refugees do not have disabilities – that they do not exist and therefore do not require access to these services.

Read more:

<http://www.immigrantandrefugeeff.ca/violence-against-women/women-with-disabilities>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Saudi Arabia Orders Women Segregated From Men in Council Meetings

Ruling deals setback to women's rights after recent municipal elections

Saudi Arabia has ordered the segregation of men and women in local council meetings, in a setback to women's rights in the ultraconservative kingdom.

Under the new rules, which follow the recent election of women to Saudi Arabia's local councils, female representatives must now participate in the council meetings through a video link. The men will be able to hear their female colleagues, but not see them.

Females represent a fraction of the council members—38 out of 2,106 officials—but the same-room ban is a reminder of the challenges women face in Saudi Arabia, where they still can't drive or travel abroad without the permission of a male relative.

"I am really upset," said Samar Fatany, a women's rights activist and columnist with Saudi Gazette newspaper of the rules, which were introduced last week by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs but only gained national attention in recent days. "You don't put them out there for show and then marginalize them."

Read more:

<http://www.wunrn.com/2016/07/saudi-arabia-orders-women-segregated-from-men-in-municipal-council-meetings-hear-but-not-see-the-women/>

Brexit and women's rights – what does it all mean?



As the fallout from the EU Referendum intensifies, and with every passing day come resignations, declarations of so-called “independence”, and political meltdown on a scale not seen in a generation, Womankind is sure of one thing: we will stand in solidarity with women's movements in the UK, in Europe and across the world to ensure that the rights of all women are protected in the UK's exit of the European Union.

We are grateful for the solidarity shown to us by our partners at this time.

The EU has important frameworks and legislation that protect women living in the UK – from violence in the home, laws to protect parental leave (for mothers and for fathers), and laws that protect part-time workers from exploitation, the majority of whom are women. We also know that any financial insecurity, recession or increase in austerity, affects women first and most viciously – as the Women's Budget Group says, “women again stand to gain the least, and lose the most” from austerity budgets.

Read more:

<https://www.womankind.org.uk/blog/detail/our-blog/2016/06/28/brexit-and-women-s-rights-what-does-it-all-mean>

Refusing to recognise polygamy in the West: a solution or a soundbite?

Polygamy in the UK and the West raises many questions and challenges: integration of migrant communities, ensuring adherence to State laws, the role of Sharia courts and balancing freedom of religion and gender equality.

As the United Kingdom was in the final throes of the EU referendum debate, polygamy was being discussed in the German Bundestag. On 15 June, Heiko Maas, the German Minister of Justice, stated that Germany will not recognize polygamy or marriages involving minors. The law in Germany, as in many other countries including the UK is clear: no-one is allowed to be legally married to more than one person at a time. But in practice polygamous relationships are often quietly tolerated.

This example is the latest in a now regular pattern of polygamous marriages being raised in the context of Muslims in Europe and immigration concerns, welfare benefits, and the incompatibility of Islamic marriage practices with Western values. Germany is not alone in raising concerns about polygamous families. Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, France and the UK are all grappling with the issue of polygamy in countries where marriage laws define marriage as between two people.

Read more:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/yasmin-rehman/refusing-to-recognise-polygamy-in-west-solution-or-soundbite>

Is the gender pay gap really the result of discrimination?



Another year, another Time Use survey from the Department of Labor — and another eyebrow-raising revelation that men log more hours at work than women.

Those who argue both genders receive equal pay for equal work, once you control for choice, often point to the annual report, which breaks down how Americans pass their days.

Since 2003, when government researchers started collecting the data, men have reported devoting more life to paid labor than their female counterparts. In 2015, employed men recorded working an average 42 minutes per day longer than employed women. Women, meanwhile, said they spent more time on housework: 2.6 hours, compared to the men's 2.1 hours.

"This difference partly reflects women's greater likelihood of working part time," the authors explained.

Read more:

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/07/is-the-gender-pay-gap-really-the-result-of-discrimination/?utm_content=buffer8d202&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Despite reform, Saudi "guardianship" still restricts women: HRW



Saudi Arabian laws requiring women to have male guardians have been reformed in recent years but continue to restrict and endanger them, obstructing government plans to reform the economy, U.S.-based Human Rights Watch says in a report.

The report drew criticism on Sunday from a government rights official, who said the system was designed to protect and help women, and was less restrictive than portrayed by HRW.

Women in Saudi Arabia must usually obtain permission from a guardian - father, husband, or son - to travel, study or marry.

These laws, making women legal wards of a male relative and backed by a powerful clerical establishment, have in recent years been reformed, with women no longer needing to obtain male guardian permission to work, HRW said in the report, "Boxed In: Women and Saudi Arabia's Male Guardianship System."

Read more:

<https://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/World/2016/Jul-17/362520-despite-reform-saudi-guardianship-still-restricts-women-hrw.ashx>

Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa



Palgrave Macmillan has just published "Women's Movements in Post-"Arab Spring" North Africa", a book edited by Fatima Sadiqi.

The volume is divided into two parts, comprising five and fourteen chapters, respectively. The first part contextualizes the various emerging post-revolution dynamics and lays the groundwork for the country-specific discussions in the second part. The conceptual framework adopted in the book is based on five inter-related notions: a post-revolution ideological "Center" where women's issues are prominent, women's persistence in the face of cultural resistance and backlash, the "between secular and Islamic space" that characterize women's post-revolution expressions, gender as a "lived" category that explains women's "lived" experiences, and the twin paradoxical realities in women's lives: political participation and denial of authority and how this ambivalences of inclusion is "manipulated."

Read more:

<http://www.wunrn.com/2016/07/womens-movements-in-post-arab-spring-north-africa/>

The Protection of the Family

At the 31st Session of the Council, the report was mandated by the protection of family resolution in the 29th Session was tabled. The report was the outcome of a controversial resolution in the 29th Session of the Council which was sponsored by a cross-regional group of states including Egypt, Cote d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Mauritania, Morocco, Russian Federation, Tunisia, Uganda, Qatar, Belarus, China and Bangladesh.

The 'controversy' at the center of the resolution concerned the intent of the resolution itself. Was it to protect the family, or was it to use the language of protecting the family to actually target those who were vulnerable to abuse within families including children, women and LGBTI persons? Many states as well as civil society activists who were concerned about LGBTI rights, child rights and gender rights were concerned that it would be a vehicle to roll back hard won rights.

The Report that was tabled did a fine job of addressing these concerns while at the same time stressing the role of the family in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development.

Read more:

<http://arc-international.net/global-advocacy/human-rights-council/report-on-the-31st-session-of-the-human-rights-council/the-protection-of-the-family/>

For a direct link to report:

<http://arc-international.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/31HRCReport2.pdf>

Arabic Media Fiction on Women's role in Society & their Rights



While countries in the Arabic-speaking world differ in prosperity, population, and resources, they share strong similarities in cultural terms, and in governance and social structures. Many countries in the region find women in economically dependent positions within the family, with no or little decision-making power, and exposed to some form of violence. Issues that affect women, such as their role in society, their rights and responsibilities, and the problems they face in private and in public, are taboo and rarely discussed. Consequently, there are few public platforms for an open dialogue to address them and discuss ways for women to maintain their cultural identities while pursuing their aspirations and realizing their full potential. Consequently, many Arab women are becoming more actively involved in the public, professional and political spheres, and are role models for their peers. However, these experiences are limited and women continue to remain too often bound by societal customs, with little space to challenge them directly.

Read more:

<http://b100ragl.com/en/>

Who are they, these revolutionary Rojava women?

Meredith Tax just had to find out who they were - the revolutionary women of Rojava, bearing arms against ISIS, building a new world...she had to find their story, for herself, and in her new book, for us.



Imagine a life amidst war, another war, and recovery from decades of war, where humans decide that all public positions are shared between women and men, and where, in fact, everything is shared.

It's not a bleak but beautiful fantasy dreamed up by Ursula le Guin, it is here and now on the border between Syria and Turkey. It is Rojava.

Compare and contrast with a rich, lush, green and pleasant land that has just voted - whether it fully knows it or not - to abandon equality and human rights and sharing anything with anyone. It is here and now and it is England.

Across the Atlantic, in New York, a stalwart seeker after equality and human rights, the feminist writer-activist Meredith Tax, noticed morsels of news about that faraway enclave called Rojava and became excited: could it be?

Read more:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/beatrix-campbell/who-are-these-revolutionary-Rojava-women>

Feminist Dissent: why a new journal on gender and fundamentalism?

A new journal, Feminist Dissent, aims to create a space to interrogate the multi-faceted links between historical and resurgent religious fundamentalism and gender.



In the last two decades there has been an exponential growth not only in fundamentalist movements around the world, but also in systematic research and debate about the scope, strategies and impacts of fundamentalist mobilisations.

The power of faith-based organisations, among which fundamentalist tendencies have found fertile ground, has also been enhanced through their ability to work on multiple levels - through international, nation state, and oppositional or civil society spaces - to their own advantage.

The new journal, *Feminist Dissent*, which is hosted by the University of Warwick, brings together innovative and critical insights to enhance our understanding of the relationship between gender, fundamentalism and related socio-political issues.

Read more:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/sukhwant-dhaliwal-chitra-nagarajan-rashmi-varma/feminist-dissent-why-new-journal-on-gender-and->

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