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NEWS & ARTICLES

GENDER ACTIVISM

Tunisians protest to demand legal protection of women's rights

Thousands of Tunisians have rallied to protest against what they see as a push by the Islamist-led government for constitutional changes that would degrade women's status in one of the Arab world's most liberal nations. The protest by 6,000 mostly Tunisian women is the latest twist in a row over the role of Islam in a constitution being drawn up by a new assembly. Tunisia's ruling Ennahda Movement is under pressure from both hardline Salafi Muslims, who are calling for the introduction of Islamic law, and secular opposition parties. Activists are unhappy with a stipulation in a draft of the constitution that considers women to be "complementary to men" and want a pioneering 1956 law that grant women full equality with men to remain in place. The protesters marched across main routes in the capital Tunis to demand that the government, led since October by Islamist moderates Ennahda, turn its attention instead to basic issues such as unemployment and regional development. They carried banners reading: "Rise up women for your rights to be enshrined in the constitution" and "Ghannouchi clear off, Tunisian women are strong", referring to Ennahda's leader, Rachid Ghannouchi. Sami Layouni, 40, was one of the few men attending the protest. "We are here to support women and to say there are men who stand for women's rights," he said, carrying a placard reading: "A woman is no complement, she is everything." "We are proud of Tunisian women ... and we will not let Islamists turn our spring into a winter," Layouni added. Carrying a placard that called for equal rights, 52-year-old Fouzia Belgaid said last year's revolt should not have led to such debate in Tunisian society. "Normally, more important issues ought to be tackled like unemployment, regional development," she said. "Ennahda seems bent on making steps backwards but we are here to say that Tunisian women will not accept that. I fear for the future of my daughters who may grow up in a totally different Tunisia." Ennahda was banned under former president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. After the leader was toppled in mass protests that sparked the Arab spring last year, Ennahda won the most seats in elections to a constituent assembly in October and formed a government in coalition with two secular parties. The party has



promised not to impose strict Muslim rules and to respect women's rights. One of its members, Farida al-Obeidi, who chairs the assembly's human rights and public freedoms panel, said the wording of the draft did not represent a backwards step for Tunisian women. The draft stipulates "sharing of roles and does not mean that women are worth less than men", she said. Activists are concerned that once approved, the new rules would lead to future setbacks. "Major retreats usually begin with one step," said Ahlam Belhadj, who chairs the Democratic Women's Association. "If we stay silent today, we will open the door to everything else and end up surprised by even more serious decisions," she said. To have more information please follow the link

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/14/tunisians-demand-protection-womens-rights>

Lebanese protest against anal exams on suspected gays

Dozens of people demonstrated outside the law courts in the Lebanese capital on Saturday to protest the use of anal "tests" on men suspected of homosexuality, which is a criminal offence in the Arab country.

The rally followed a July 28 police raid on a gay venue in a working class district of Beirut when 36 men were taken into custody and forced to undergo the examinations, reportedly to determine their sexual orientation.

Lebanon-based HELEM, considered the Arab world's leading lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights group, called for the rally under the slogan: "Stand up against the tests of shame, vaginal or anal."

It also voiced solidarity with women subjected to so-called "virginity tests."

"We're here because we want a clear statement from the ministry of justice that these kind of tests should be completely abolished and punished by the law," said participant George Azzi.

"The syndicate of doctors has declared these tests are irrelevant scientifically and it's illegal for doctors to do these tests, but that doesn't mean police can't still request it," he said.

Men and women -- ranging from gay and lesbian young adults to a father and daughter -- chanted in unison and held banners that read: "United to abolish the tests of shame."

Other homemade signs struck a more sarcastic tone: "Honorable minister, before you test my anus, at least take me out to dinner," read one.

But for most, the tests were no laughing matter.

To Read more follow the link <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Aug-11/184287-lebanese-protest-against-anal-exams-on-suspected-gays.ashx#ixzz24VVJKGyc>

Lebanese advocates ABAAD partner with men for gender equality

A new Lebanon based human rights and equality initiative is now partnering with men to reach the goal as advocates for equality of the sexes in the Middle East region and beyond. To do this ABAAD - Resource Center for Gender Equality in Beirut has partnered with the IMC - International Medical Corps to bring a new and innovative approach to advocacy - by bringing men into the mix with programs, including TV commercials, aimed to help men



إن هذه الفحوصات
شرجية كانت أم مهبلية
هي إغتصاب
يطلب من النياية العامة
يتفذه الأطباء الشرعيين

السبت ١٠ آب الساعة ١٠ صباحاً
وقفه إمام بيت الطبيب



deal with anger management as part of their commitment to improving violence in society. To find out more, WNN - Women News Network reporter Elahe Amani interviewed ABAAD director Ghida Anani, along with Anthony Keedi, Director of ABAAD's new 'Men Center' which is located in Lebanon's capital city of Beirut. (...)

The slogan "We are willing - and here - to listen" has a double meaning... "Someone is speaking to you in an abusive manner." While men have long been addressed as perpetrators, now they are also being addressed as 'partners in prevention.' Many studies have argued that in associating men with violence, we should also ensure that men are part of the solution.

The IMC - International Medical Corps and the ABAAD - Resource Center for Gender Equality, along with the support of the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality, are now launching a nation-wide media campaign. The campaign targets men residing in Lebanon, among other communities, in an inclusive approach to engage them in combating violence against women. The ABAAD Men Center comes as a new approach in Lebanon, and in the Middle East, to revisit gender stereotypes. The Center also aims to change individual men and boys' understanding of 'acceptable' behaviors as an essential component in ending violence against women and girls. The IMC with ABAAD took the initiative to establish the Men Center as a space where trained professionals treat men with respect, anonymity, and confidentiality. Through specialized support, the Centre's team provides men with ways of relieving stress, identifying triggers of anger, discovering possible alternatives for anger control and engaging [men] with their loved ones in a less aggressive manner. To read more about the campaign <http://www.wluml.org/news/lebanon-lebanese-advocates-abaad-partner-men-gender-equality>

United Arab Emirates - First Women's Museum

In the patriarchal societies of the Arab world, quite a few women are getting noticed for flouting conventional gender norms. There's Saudi Arabia's Manal al-Sharif, who lost her job and came under great pressure for driving a car and putting a video of it on YouTube; Sheikha Mayassa Al Thani, a powerful art patron in Qatar; and Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, a globe-trotting minister of foreign trade for the United Arab Emirates (UAE). And later this year the region will see its first museum dedicated to the accomplishments of women. The Women's Museum of the United Arab Emirates is the creation of Rafia Obaid Ghubash, an academic, psychiatrist and former president of the Arabian Gulf University, who campaigns for women's education. Her aim is to educate visitors—locals, expats and tourists—that Emirati women have enjoyed more power and influence than is recognised. She also wants to re-connect the fast-moving modern Emirates with its history and tradition. The three-storey museum is determinedly contemporary: traditional jewellery hangs suspended in minimalist cases; material wraps a stylised mannequin; worn housework tools are displayed alongside artwork by modern female Emirati artists.

Dr Ghubash declined a free site in Bastakya (an official Dubai heritage district), preferring to buy one in Deira, Dubai's old nexus of souks. She sold off some commercial property she owned to finance the museum herself, at a cost of around \$4m, and plans to seek sponsors for its projects and exhibitions. She explains that her mother taught her that womanhood need not equal subservience. Speaking in the museum to the sounds of saws and final touches, her iPhone headphones threading through her fingers like worry beads, Dr Ghubash



recalls her mother telling her: “You have to learn that your rights are born with you. Don’t think the government or a man or your husband will give you a right. It’s inside you, just practise it.”

This belief emanates from the art and artefacts on permanent display, from photographs to literature, mosaics, paintings and objects. They tell the stories of Sheikhas operating as peacemakers and dynastic linchpins, women who became pioneers in education and business, and also poets (“When you say Shakespeare, we would say Ousha Bint Khalifa”, says Dr Ghubash). Emirati women today are much better off, she adds, because many of them are now able to go to school and work, which enables financial independence. Dr Ghubash sees these changes as the legacy of Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi, who was president of the UAE from its foundation in 1971 to his death in 2004.

For Dr Ghubash the appreciation of history and tradition in rapidly developed societies like the UAE isn’t just good cross-generational manners, but mentally healthy. “Those who keep their tradition in dealing with modernity will be healthier than those who take out their tradition,” she explains. “Globalisation is an umbrella to use in part of your life but not all of your life.” When talking of Dubai’s near-famine years during the Second World War and the six months of every year the men spent away pearl fishing, she asks, “Who was running society? Just recently you can see us but we were behind the door all the time.”

She accepts that there is a dual attitude to Arab women. “Part of the tradition is kind to women. But part is very negative. Those who are not educated just utilise the negative part.” Now female UAE graduates outnumber males two to one. Dr Ghubash wants to reach those young women, and help them appreciate the achievements of earlier female generations. “They are educated, they become powerful, you see them everywhere but there is something missing.” She also wants to close the distance between non-Arabs and locals. “Foreigners are the majority here. They know nothing about our society. You live with us and you don’t know us.” Dr Ghubash hopes locals will feel a sense of pride, and visitors will have a richer understanding of the Emirates as a place where women have played important roles in politics, business and education. The message of the museum, she says, is that “everything from your past is important to you.” To read more about the museums please follow the link <https://ritachemaly.wordpress.com/2012/08/03/museums-in-the-middle-east-its-a-womans-world/>

Libya - Women Win 33 Seats in National Assembly Elections

Libya’s first post-Gaddafi parliamentary elections took place July 7th 2012, reviving a national spirit that brought fireworks to the sky and people to the streets in celebration.

Sixty-two percent of Libyans turned out for the elections, with over 1.7 million ballots cast and 3,700 candidates, including 624 women, running for seats. It was the first general election held in Libya since 1952, and, despite fears to the contrary, was widely commended by monitors for running fairly and peacefully, with few instances of interference or violence. The official results, released nearly ten days following the close of polls, were another cause for celebration. Unlike Egypt and Tunisia, which saw Islamist parties take the majority of votes, Libya announced a new parliament largely composed of an alliance of liberal parties. “It is clear that Libya has embarked on the road to an inclusive democracy as measured by the fact that women have been elected to the new assembly,” said Hibaaq Osman, founder and CEO of Karama. “Congratulations



goes to the efforts of the courageous and dignified women of Libya. We know that this did not happen by coincidence. It was these women who relentlessly worked to make this happen."

"It feels wonderful, especially now that we've changed the whole equation of the Arab Spring," commented Zahra' Langhi of the Libyan Women's Platform for Peace.

Led by former interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril, the National Forces Alliance, which is made up of at least 58 parties, won 39 out of the 80 seats reserved for political parties. Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction party won 17 seats, just over 21 percent of the party list 80 seats and 8.5 percent of the total assembly. The National Assembly will be made up of 200 people in total and will include 120 independents, the allegiances of whom are largely unknown. But the greatest victory was for inclusion and representation of women. Forty percent of the voters were women and women candidates won 33 seats—32 through party lists and 1 independent. Women won approximately 16.5 percent of seats, closer to the percentages of Western nations like France and the United States. A total of 624 women registered as candidates—540 through political parties and 84 as independents. A number of women candidates planning to run as independents reportedly crossed over to run for the 80 seats allocated to political parties in order to benefit from built-in party support and resources, as well as a higher chance of winning due to the "zipper list," which required parties to ensure that women were included on the lists in alternating slots both horizontally and vertically. Karama worked with partners in Libya to launch a coalition of women, men and youth leaders from all walks of life in October 2011 in Cairo. This coalition, the Libyan Women's Platform for Peace (LWPP), has grown over the past few months to hold trainings and build campaigns for women's inclusion in the new assembly. Several women, who are affiliated to the LWPP, have run as candidates in the elections. Two of the co-founders, Asma Seriaba and Amina al-Meghairbi, won seats in the elections. Ms. Seriaba who ran as a candidate in the political list of the National Coalition in Surman shared, "In all cases whether running only or actually winning a seat, women are victorious for they played a distinctive role in the revolution and they will continue to do so in the stage of building the Libyan constitutional state, which will uphold the rights and freedom of its citizens. So we hope to become the voice of Libyan women's ambitions and aspirations." To read more follow the link

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/08_12/08_13/081312_libya.htm

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Women Refugees Flee Conflict & Gender-Based Violence in Syria

More than 75% of assisted Syrian refugees are women and children. The targeting of civilians is well documented. But sexual violence against women and girls receives little attention. Cultural norms often prevent survivors from reporting sexual assault....Gender-based violence is clearly identified as a key reason why women and girls flee Syria.

Syrian women face violence and exploitation as they flee protracted violence. *As many as 150,000 refugees have found refuge in Jordan since the start of the Syrian conflict 17 months ago.* Some 75% are women and children.

IRC - International Rescue Committee



<http://www.rescue-uk.org/international-news/targeted-violence-syrian-refugee-women-dont-know-where-turn-help>

Devil in the detail: abortion drug [misoprostol] banned in Turkey

Pursuant to a month of heated discussions, Turkish government stated that they will not amend the existing laws on abortion in Turkey and restricted their changes to the subject of making caesar sections more difficult to implement. Social media whirled about a few days, press immediately forgot about the issue, but the snake never slept.

Since the debate was bipartisan and centered around the poles of who said what and belonged to which group, a subject so complicated and without a widespread consensus ended up being imprisoned within the walls of daily agenda. No real public discussion was enabled; the opinion makers yelled and gagged and powers to be let it go on while preparing for their real scheme.

Since the leader of the governing party made it clear that their "religious and vindictive" new youth should increase in numbers, abortions and family planning should be abolished. This author is fully aware of the fact that his rhetoric is exactly that and nothing more. But in reality AKP government and the state machinery need ignorant, scarcely educated majority to increase as a percentage of total population to guarantee their political and social existence. Since level of education and economical wealth has an inverse relationship with the number of kids in households, their "3 children minimum for each family" motto will evidently

succeed only in undereducated and ill-informed population, increasing their vast numbers even more. So while arguing publicly that the



government has no immediate plans to ban abortion, Ministry of Health banned all drugs containing misoprostol used in medical abortion on July 9th with instructions by Turkish Medicine Informations Network. World Health Organisation declares that misoprostol can be used safely to induce an abortion up to nine weeks of pregnancy and places the substance on the List of Essential Medicines. In Turkish pharmacies medicine containing the banned substance-misoprostol; Arthrotec (used in osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis treatment) and Cytotec (used in peptic ulcer and Gastroesophageal reflux disease treatment) are banned now. Turkish government is simply preventing ulcer and arthritis patients' access to affordable treatment with no literature or explanation behind their decision to prevent medical abortions. No other drugs enabling medical abortions that contain Misoprostol or Mifepristone are available in Turkey. To read more about the issue follow the link <http://www.theglobetimes.com/2012/07/16/devil-in-detail-abortion-drugs-banned-in-turkey/>

Iran Obstructs Women's Access to Education, Moves Closer to Segregating University Classes and Bars Women's Entry to Certain Majors

In recent weeks, Iran has taken significant action to segregate university classes, including closing certain majors to women entirely. Following the release of university entrance

exam results for the upcoming academic year, 36 universities announced that they will bar women from pursuing 77 fields of study, such as engineering, accounting, education, counseling, and chemistry. Additionally, liberal arts programs including economics, administration, psychology, library sciences, and literature will begin reducing gender quotas by 30 - 40 percent. Following the contested 2009 presidential elections that sparked a protest movement not seen since the 1979 revolution, Iran has focused on gender segregating classes at universities, which have long been seen as a hotbed of political dissent. Science Minister Kamran Daneshjoo has called the segregation effort a top priority to protect morality. Iran's parliamentary commission on education and research has summoned Daneshjoo to explain the recently instated barriers to women's full access to education. This move is a significant rollback for women's rights and educational gains, as women constitute the majority of college graduates, and have outnumbered men at universities for more than a decade. Gender apartheid and field of study restrictions at Iranian universities will no doubt harm the quality of education for female students, as well as job prospects, and have adverse implications for the next generation of college applicants. To read more follow the link



<http://www.learningpartnership.org/lib/iran-obstructs-women%E2%80%99s-access-education-moves-closer-segregating-university-classes-and-bars-wom>

And ... Aggressive Enforcement by Morality Police as for the Women's Dress Code in Iran

An annual test of wills between Iran's morality police and women who dress in ways that are deemed unacceptable has begun in cities across the Islamic republic.

But this year, the stakes are unusually high.

As Iranian leaders attempt to deflect the public's attention from economic woes spurred by crushing foreign sanctions, they risk alienating large segments of a society that is already deeply divided.

Mandatory female covering known as hijab has been a defining element of Iran since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Although the laws regarding proper cover haven't changed, some women have grown bolder in interpreting the limits of what they can wear, creating a conflict that inevitably flares each summer as temperatures climb.



The government's offensive this year has been marked by the stationing of mixed-gender teams of morality police in Tehran's main squares.

In recent weeks, 53 coffee shops and 87 restaurants have been closed in Tehran for serving customers with improper hijab or for other gender-related offenses, such as permitting women to smoke hookah pipes. Concerts have been abruptly canceled because of inappropriate dress and too much contact between male and female fans. Approximately 80 stands at an international food fair were closed last month because, officials said, the women working at them were either breaking hijab rules or wearing too much makeup.

Those arrested face up to two months in prison or even lashing, penalties that have been on the books for years but have rarely been imposed.

The aggressive enforcement and stiff penalties have spawned resentment.

"I felt disrespected and insulted," said 30-year-old Sahar, who was arrested for wearing sleeves that went only to her forearms. "I'm a grown woman. I can decide what I can wear. I can make these decisions myself."

But authorities have made the case this year that un-Islamic dress is a matter of national security and a symptom of longtime Western meddling in Iranian affairs. Officials routinely cite the improper wearing of hijab as the cause of a variety of social maladies, from women who marry later in life to those who go into prostitution. The root problem is often blamed on "foreign agents." To read the entire story follow the link

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/08_12/08_06/080612_iran2.htm

Tehran's police chief, Ahmad-Reza Radan, this month called support for improper hijab "part of the enemy's soft war against us." Women in Gaza: how life has changed

Behind the blockade, conservatism is rising, but so too is unemployment, poverty, depression and domestic violence. Eman, 23, is dressed in a black, veiled jilbab and lives in a collapsing shack on the outskirts of Gaza City. She left school at 10 and seven years later she was married, with a baby daughter. An open sewer flows past her front door. When it rains, rubbish streams into the kitchen.

"Before the blockade, my husband used to make good money working in Israel," she says. "With the blockade, that all stopped. When he can't find any work and we have nothing to eat, he blames me. He is like a crazy animal. I stay quiet when he hits me. Afterwards, he cries and says, if he had a job, he wouldn't beat me."

It is five years since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip and Israel tightened its siege of the territory. Many men became jobless overnight and it is women who have ended up bearing the brunt of their husbands' frustration. Besides sticking to their traditional role of raising children, the blockade has compelled large numbers of women to become the breadwinners, while standing by their husbands, many of whom have depression.

Violence against women has reached alarming levels. A December 2011 study by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, PCBS, revealed that 51% of all married women in Gaza had experienced violence from their husbands in the previous 12 months.

Two thirds (65%) of women surveyed by the PCBS said they preferred to keep silent about violence in the home. Less than 1% said they would seek help.

Mona, my 22-year-old interpreter,

is astonished when I later ask what support there is for women such as Eman. "If her husband, or in fact anyone in the family, knew she had talked about this, she'd be beaten or killed. As for places for a woman to run to safety, I don't know of any."

At first glance, Eman has little in common with Mona apart from their age. The latter is fresh out of university, fluent in English and wears a canary-yellow silk blouse and tight jeans with a large designer handbag. Until a few years ago, women such as Mona were the norm in Gaza and few would question their dress sense and independence.



Nowadays, with the blockade cutting off 1.6 million Palestinians from the rest of the world, conservatism dominates much of daily life.

It has also led to spiralling rates of unemployment among men - more than 45% of working-age people are without a job, one of the highest rates in the world. "The challenges of unemployment, fear of violence and restriction on movement can often mean that women and children are at the receiving end of men's frustration," says Ghada al-Najar from Oxfam Gaza. "There are many reasons why domestic violence is on the increase, including psychological trauma, the feeling of being trapped, and rampant poverty." To read more follow the link <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/30/women-gaza-life-changed>

Several arrested as sexual harassment surges in Cairo

Vice police have detected numerous instances of sexual harassment on the first two days of the Islamic Eid al-Fitr holiday at several public areas in Cairo, the state-run news agency MENA reported.

At the Giza Zoo, young people who formed groups to protect females from harassment were assaulted by the harassers, which caused violence to break out between both sides. Police arrested several and referred them to prosecution.

The website of the independent daily Al-Tahrir said that several women were heard yelling on the Nile Corniche in front of the State TV building. It added that the same area on had witnessed fights as some youth, and even children, allegedly molested female passers-by.

Fustat Garden also saw tussles as hundreds of young men encircled a number of girls and attempted to assault them before others managed to free them.

Eyewitnesses said that motorbike riders on Gameat al-Dawal al-Arabiya, a popular gathering place, harassed girls amid a total absence of police.

Other eyewitnesses said some young men harassed girls in Tahrir Square on Sunday and Monday, which triggered verbal altercations.

Several organized popular initiatives to counter harassment on the holiday and to promote awareness of the dangers of sexual harassment.

The Imprint Movement, one of the initiatives, described Eid al-Fitr as a "season for harassment," citing collective harassment incidents that had been detected during that period over the past years.

Organizers said on their Facebook page that a task force of 15 people, in addition to 40 volunteers, have been stationed at subway stations both inside trains and platforms.

In 2008, a detailed study about sexual harassment was published by the local watchdog Egyptian Center for Women's Rights. It said that nearly two-thirds of Egyptian men admitted to having sexually harassed women.

"Sexual harassment has become an overwhelming and very real problem experienced by all women in Egyptian society, often on a daily basis," said the center, adding that only 2.4 percent of Egyptian women reported it to the police. Most said they did not believe anyone would help. To know more about the issue follow the link

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/several-arrested-sexual-harassment-surges-cairo>



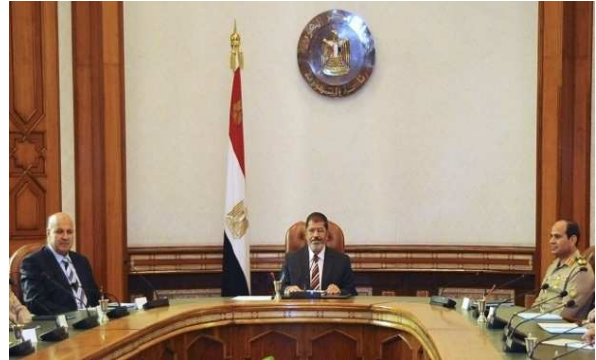
GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Egypt's Mursi appoints Christian man and two women for his cabinet

A Christian man and two women are among the new advisers appointed to Egyptian president Mohammad Mursi's cabinet, a spokesman for the presidency said. The spokesman said that Samir Morcos, a Coptic intellectual, as well as academic Pakinam el-Sharkawi and writer Sukaina Fuad would become aides to the president. Saif AbdelFattah, a professor of political science, will also join Mursi's team as an adviser. With the recent appointments, Mursi has fulfilled a promise he made in his campaign to pick a Christian and a woman as part of his cabinet.

When his Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated party was elected to power earlier this year, there were fears the Islamist movement's beliefs would restrict power from minorities and women. Mursi's spokesman, Yassir Ali, said the rest of the cabinet would be announced prior to Mursi's upcoming visit to China, schedule for Aug. 27. He added that new members would be picked for the cabinet after consulting with different political factions in the country.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/08/22/233590.html>



Women-Only Industrial Cities in Saudi Arabia

Efforts are under way to establish the Kingdom's first women-only industrial city in the Eastern Province city of Hofuf. Saudi Industrial Property Authority (Modon) has initiated works for planning and development of the city, targeting women investors. "We are now working on a second industrial city for women," said Saleh Al-Rasheed, acting director general of Modon. "We have plans to establish a number of women-only industries in various parts of the Kingdom," he added. Al-Rasheed said Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs Prince Mansour bin Miteb, has already allocated land for the first women-only industrial city in Hofuf. The move follows a Cabinet decision that urged authorities to create more job opportunities for women in order for them to play an important role in the Kingdom's development. The Cabinet also instructed the relevant ministry to allocate lands within the city limits to establish industrial projects for women. The new industrial city in Hofuf is located near Al-Ahsa Airport. Modon seeks to allocate land for industrial development and develop industrial cities in collaboration with a number of government agencies and the private sector to meet the requirements of investors.



Al-Rasheed highlighted Saudi women's ability to engage in various industrial activities, adding that the development of women-only industrial cities would help tap their energy to boost national development.

"I am sure that women can demonstrate their efficiency in many light and clean industrial sectors that suit their interests, nature and capabilities," the Modon chief said.

The industrial cities now comprise factories owned by women as well as companies with some production lines set aside for women.

Modon has initiated an Industrial Innovation Award and offers prizes worth one million riyals. Nominations for the award can be made through the website www.modon.gov.sa.

The award targets everyone, especially young men and women workers. "We value the important role being played by women in the business sector and their ability to manage industries and other sectors.

Established in 2001, Modon is responsible for the development and management of industrial cities. Currently it supervises 29 cities, including three each in Riyadh, Dammam and Jeddah. Other cities are located in Qassim (two cities), Al-Ahsa, Madinah, Al-Kharj, Sudair, Hail, Tabuk, Arar, Al-Jouf, Asir, Jazan, Najran, Baha, Taif, Zulfi, Shaqra and Hafr Al-Batin. There are cities under planning and designing stages as well, Al-Rasheed said. They include Salwa, Dhuba, Baha-II, Military Industries and Jeddah-IV. It is targeted that during the next five years, the number of industrial cities would reach 40 industrial cities with developed industrial lands of not less than 160 million square meters. Modon recently signed two contracts worth SR 68 million to develop industrial cities in Qassim. The first contract (SR 32.8 million) was to implement the first phase of the Qassim-II Industrial City, covering an area of 1.3 million square meters. The second contract (SR 35 million) was to build a road linking the industrial city with Riyadh-Qassim highway. In a related development, the Industrial Development Fund has approved 14 loans worth SR 2.9 billion to establish nine new industrial projects and expand five existing industries. The new projects require a total investment of SR 6 billion, according to Ali Al-Ayed, director general of the fund. To know more about the issue, follow the link <http://en-maktoob.news.yahoo.com/modon-plans-establish-women-only-industrial-cities-000000584.html>

Women in Prison - Drama - Social & Personal Issues in Lebanon

Rarely does one consider prison a site for entertainment and performing arts. Last spring however, Zeina Daccache - a certified NADT drama therapist and founder of Lebanon's drama therapy program Catharsis - transformed the 3rd floor of Baabda prison, Lebanon's largest female detention center, into a stage for inmates to express themselves through tears and laughter.

Drama therapy, which uses theater for personal and mental growth, has grown increasingly popular over the years. It is often used in schools, hospitals, detention and rehab centers to help those struggling with personal problems. Daccache is keen on expanding the concept to Lebanon, where prison is infamous for its harsh, near dismal, living conditions. Two summers ago, I had the



honor of partaking in a workshop organized by Daccache in Roumieh Prison, Lebanon's most notorious detention center. Originally built for 1,500, Roumieh Prison now holds some 3,700 inmates, of which some 2,800 are still awaiting their trial. After a few minutes I had forgotten I was mingling with prisoners, some of whom are convicted of murder. In 2009, those inmates had taken to the stage within Roumieh's walls performing in "12 Angry Lebanese," a play adapted from the original "12 Angry Men." The audience included prisoner's families as well as Lebanese lawmakers. For Daccache, a 32-year-old graduate in clinical psychology and drama therapy, "12 Angry Lebanese" was the first such type of endeavor. Last May, she reproduced a similar project with female inmates called "Scheherazade in Baabda," which highlights both female prisoners' daily struggles and increased vulnerability as women living in a conservative and patriarchal society. Drawn from sessions of brainstorming with the women in Baabda prison, the play was created in only a few months. "There were things that were more touching, to which I could relate

and which probably helped me write the play,” Daccache tells me after the performance. “But everyone’s input was taken into account. It’s a collaboration in which the women are writing their own stories” she insists, clearly passionate and dedicated to the causes of both prisoners and women in her country. The 45-minute performance, comprised partly of nostalgic soliloquies of mothers reminiscing about their children to the mere sight of the sea, takes the audience on a poignant journey into these women’s lives. In more rebellious instances, the protagonists lash out at the country’s patriarchal system and twisted view of women and their role. “Adultery, for instance, is considered a crime in Lebanon. Women will be thrown in prison for cheating on their husbands, but I’ve never seen a man in prison for adultery,” Daccache tells me. In addition, Lebanese law does not criminalize domestic violence or rape and women are not protected from this type of abuse. Indeed, several of the actresses have been jailed for adultery. A number of others are doing time for drug use or drug dealing, murder or attempted murder, among other reasons. “Many of these accusations,” adds Daccache, “come as a result of self-defense or out of misery. For example, there is no minimal age for marriage in Lebanon, so girls are often forced to marry men they do not love, or at a young age, and end up stuck with men who abuse them,” all of which are issues that are either explicitly or less explicitly addressed in the play. In July, Daccache took the play outdoors with a live performance in downtown Beirut featuring several of the women who have completed their sentences and have recently been released. For more information about the play, or Catharsis’ work in general, please visit: <http://www.catharsislcdt.org/> To read more about the sessions please follow the link http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/08_12/08_13/081312_lebanon.htm

Woman Triumphs over Disability - Inspiring Video

MOMENT by **MOMENT**, produced by Oscar-nominated, Emmy-winning filmmaker, Dorothy Fadiman, is the story of a woman who suffered a spinal cord injury. After being told there was no hope for movement below her shoulders, she proceeded to rehabilitate herself beyond all predictions.

MOMENT BY MOMENT is Molly's story about disability, health and healing, attitude, choice and intention, sex, intimacy, and relationships.

This film is appropriate viewing for anyone with or without a disability, their family, friends and extended community. We envision getting this into the hands of physicians and rehab specialist, and anyone who serves or cares about people who are aging or who have a disability. To watch the video follow the link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rr-KunjNnaE>



Women's Land Rights - International Land Coalition

The percentage of land owned by women is disproportionately small considering their crucial contribution to agriculture and especially the food security of households and communities. The existing gender inequality in access to and control over natural resources is an obstacle to their sustainable management and to sustainable development in general. There are two key arguments for promoting women’s land rights:

1. Women’s human rights are violated

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that human rights apply equally to all, regardless of sex, yet women around the world are disproportionately affected by human

rights violations, which keeps them trapped in poverty. Women have fewer benefits and protections under legal systems than men and are largely excluded from decision-making structures. Women also lack control of financial resources, have larger work burdens, and are more likely to suffer from social isolation and threats or acts of violence.

2. Women's key role in food security and natural resource management is not recognised. Women are primary agricultural producers, cultivating between 60 and 80 per cent of the food in most developing countries, and ensure household food security. Studies have found that agricultural productivity increases when women are given the same inputs as men. Yet frequently women access land through male relatives only, and not in their own right. Women's lack of access to and control over land is a key factor contributing to their poverty, with devastating results for households and communities, and needs to be addressed if poverty and hunger are to be reduced.



What can be done?

Women's access to and control over resources is shaped by complex systems of common and civil law as well as customary and religious laws and practices. International law and conventions such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) protect women's human rights in signatory states, but are often at odds with national legislation, the actual enforcement of legislation, or local practices. Furthermore, the practise and perception of a woman's position in the household, family and community affects to what extent women can exercise their land rights.

The ability to access land and to claim, use and defend rights to natural resources is contingent on processes of empowerment. Women face additional hurdles to empowerment, ranging from their status within household and community to discriminatory customary or statutory laws - such hurdles need to be addressed to contribute to women's empowerment, political, legal and economic, and to transforming gender roles so that women participate in society on an equal footing.

A frequent criticism of efforts for women's empowerment and gender equality is that "western feminism" is a form of cultural imperialism lacking respect for local tradition and culture. On the contrary, a feminist approach challenges inequality between the sexes - much like inequality of wealth - as an obstacle to people-centred development. To read all the article follow the link

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/08_12/08_13/081312_women%27s.htm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Women's Right to Nationality Campaign Newsletter, Issue Zero

The Women's Right to Nationality Campaign is pleased to introduce the zero issue of its new Nationality Newsletter.

The Nationality Newsletter seeks to highlight key news related to this advocacy campaign. It also provides regular updates on the campaign's activities seeking to reform the nationality law in Lebanon. This ad hoc newsletter will also include a regular feature which provides information on important and relevant legal and administrative procedures of interest to Lebanese women married to non-nationals. Each issue will also profile one of the women leaders of the campaign in an effort to recognize the daily struggles of women in Lebanon in seeking justice, equality and an end to discrimination. We hope that this newsletter will contribute to mobilizing more supporters for this just cause and to the recognition to women's full citizenship rights. To access this issue, kindly click the following link: http://crtda.org.lb/webfm_send/7



UN Women congratulates the government and people of Tunisia

On National Women's Day, UN Women congratulates the Government and people of Tunisia on their leadership in women's empowerment and gender equality. Calls on the Tunisian



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

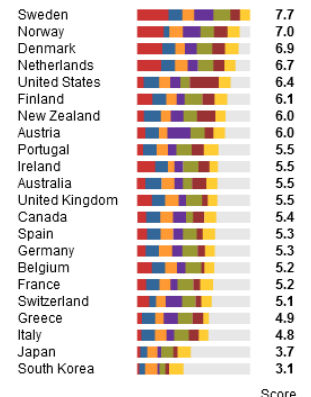
people and Government to continue championing gender equality in the constitutional revision process. United Nations, New York- 13 August 2012 - On National Women's Day, UN Women recognizes and applauds the historic role Tunisia has played in the region as a pioneer for gender equality and women's rights. UN Women joins Tunisian women and men, civil society, and national leadership in marking the 1956 Personal Status Code, the groundbreaking law that enshrined the principle of equality of men and women and granted Tunisian women the rights that they have enjoyed since then for more than a half century. Women played - and continue to play - a key role as leaders of change in Tunisia, from the streets to the ballot boxes to the decision-making bodies responsible for rebuilding democratic state and inclusive political institutions accountable to all of its citizens. UN Women is committed to supporting Tunisian women and civil society to participate meaningfully in these processes and to carry forward and advance the rights that Tunisian women have long cherished. The passage of the unprecedented parity electoral law in April 2011 reaffirmed Tunisia's continued leadership in advocating for the equal rights of men and women and their participation at all levels of public decision making. In tribute to these resounding achievements, UN Women turns to the Government and the people of Tunisia for their continued championing of women's empowerment and equality in the constitutional revision process and public life at large.

To read more please follow the link <http://www.unwomen.org/2012/08/on-national-womens-day-un-women-congratulates-the...>

Development Index for Countries - Gender Equality Indicator?

Each year since 2003, the Center for Global Development has “ranked the rich”—assessing which wealthy nations do the most (for their size) to bring good government and prosperity to the rest of the world. Today, we released the 9th edition of this assessment, the 2011 Commitment to Development Index. The core idea of the CDI is that nations are linked in many ways: through foreign aid, trade and investment flows, movement of people, natural resources, military affairs, technology. Governments, through their policies and actions, influence these linkages for good and ill. In particular, helping poorer nations takes more than aid. For more information please follow the link

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/08_12/08_06/080612_development.htm



CALLS

Call for Papers - Mapping Feminist Movements, Moments, Mobilisations - 2013 Conference - Feminist & Women's Studies Association, UK & Ireland (FWSA)

The Lady Doth Protest: Mapping Feminist Movements, Moments, and Mobilisations. Women have long participated in and led a wide variety of protests, feminist and otherwise. Their historical participation in movements against, for example, colonialism and militarism; for equal rights and civil liberties; on livelihood issues and against capitalist expansion has routinely thrown up questions about feminist knowledge, praxis, and personal-public life. More recently, the visibility of women on a global scale in the ‘Arab spring’, the North American ‘occupy’ movement and activist marches like the ‘Slut Walk’ and ‘Muff March’ phenomena, makes revisiting debates on women and protest apposite. At the same time, the ‘war on terror’, the so-called death of multiculturalism in Europe, the racialization of religion, and women’s global participation in fundamentalist mobilisations and armed struggle raises new questions concerning the interstices between race, religion, class, sexuality and citizenship. These questions that feminism(s) needs to (re)consider whilst contextualising women in protest and protest more generally lie at the heart of this



conference theme. We seek to critically reflect upon the concept of feminist protest - its discourse, image and impact, and to examine the possibility of creative feminist engagement across a spectrum of *moments*, *movements* and *mobilisations*.

We conceive of the term ‘protest’ in its widest sense as both formal and quotidian contentious action existing in a variety of practices including activism, critical pedagogies, literature, film, technologies, art and aesthetics - all of which coalesce around the challenge they mount to multiple hegemonies. By unpacking the concept of protest and expanding existing notions of the political through a feminist lens, we seek to understand how feminist protest, in particular, responds to and emerges within/in spite of, the challenges of our contemporary world. In exploring feminism’s relationship with a wide variety of contemporary concerns, social movements and across a range of disciplines, we

invite papers from across the arts, humanities and social sciences, that aim to address the possibilities and complexities of feminist mobilisation within the socio-cultural, political, economic, and pedagogic specificities of the temporal spaces we currently find ourselves in. Topics may include, but are by no means limited to:

- Women and protest: theoretical, historical, and contemporaneous concerns;
- Sexual and gendered economies of neoliberalism, recession, and austerity;
- Gender, securitization, counterterrorism, and nationalism(s);
- The impacts of new forms of (transnational) activism and protest politics on feminism; connecting theory and practice;
- Critical pedagogy and feminist scholarship in times of continuity and change;
- The poetics of protest: literature, music, film, and art;
- Race, Class, Gender and the State;
- Spirituality, Faith, and Religion;
- Feminist temporalities in protest;
- The language and rhetoric of protests, movements and feminist mobility;
- Non or anti-feminist protest;
- Sexuality and protest, and heteronationalisms

Please send panel proposals (600 words) and 250 word abstracts for twenty-minute papers to the conference organisers at: conf2013@fwsa.org.uk

Panels proposals should be sent by 30 September, 2012 and individual paper submissions by 30 October, 2012. To have more information follow the link <http://www.fwsaconference.co.uk/>

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