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**The MENA Gender and Development e-Brief** receives material from various sources for its publication. Should you wish to refer to these sources/ sites directly, the list includes publications from: AWID: [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org), Democracy Digest: [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org), e-Civics: [www.civics.org](http://www.civics.org), Eldis: [www.eldis.org](http://www.eldis.org), ESCWA: [www.escwa.org.lb](http://www.escwa.org.lb), GDB: [www.developmentex.com](http://www.developmentex.com), ILO: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org), One World: [www.oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net), Siyanda: [www.siyanda.org](http://www.siyanda.org), The Daily Star: [www.dailystar.com.lb](http://www.dailystar.com.lb), The Drum Beat: [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com), The World Bank: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), UNDP: [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org), WLP: [www.learningpartnership.org](http://www.learningpartnership.org), WIDE: [www.wide-network.org](http://www.wide-network.org), IRIN News: [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org), Women's UN Report Network: [www.wunrn.com](http://www.wunrn.com), Women Living Under Muslim Laws: [www.wluml.org](http://www.wluml.org)

## Church of England to Name First Woman Bishop



The Church of England is to name its first ever female bishop, ending centuries of male leadership following a historic change to its rules, British media reported on Wednesday.

The Church is set to ordain a female priest as the new Bishop of Stockport, a post that has been vacant since May, newspapers The Telegraph and The Guardian reported.

The name of the new bishop would be announced on Wednesday, according to the newspapers.

The mother church of the global Anglican Communion, which has 80 million followers in more than 165 countries, gave its final approval to the change last month.

The decision, which comes two decades after the first women were ordained as priests by the Church, has provoked division in the ranks of believers and was opposed by conservatives.

Anglican churches around the world do not have an obligation to follow England's lead but the ordination will set a symbolic precedent.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/159503-press-church-of-england-to-name-first-woman-bishop>

## The Incredible Courage of Women Human Rights Defenders in the Middle East

*The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) is an independent, non-profit and non-governmental organisation that works to provide support and protection to human rights defenders (including independent journalists, bloggers, lawyers, etc.) in the Gulf region and its neighbouring countries by promoting freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. This post was originally published on December 10, 2014, and an edited version is republished on Global Voices with permission.*

On International Human Rights Day, the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) paid tribute to the courage of women human rights defenders across the Gulf region and its neighbouring countries. The region is not hospitable to human rights defenders in general and women are even more at risk in some of the most dangerous countries in the world to speak your mind, such as Iraq, where a critical comment can get you killed; or Syria, where being a human rights defender means risking your life and liberty; or Bahrain, where tearing a photo of the king could land you in jail for seven years; or Saudi Arabia, where women have been arrested for trying to drive; or Iran, where protesting about acid attacks on women will incur punishment.

The crisis in Iraq and Syria has made the wider Gulf region more unstable and the situation of women human rights defenders even more dangerous, particularly with the rise of the Islamic state group known as ISIS. As ISIS has spread across Iraq and Syria, women have been murdered or even enslaved.

Read more:

<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/12/15/the-incredible-courage-of-women-human-rights-defenders-in-the-middle-east/>

## The Libyan Youth Movement: Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow

*AWID recently spoke with Ayat Mneina, co-founder of the Libyan Youth Movement, on the evolving civil war in Libya following the uprising, and subsequent fall of Gaddafi*

The Libyan Youth Movement is a youth-led and youth-focused social media and online-based initiative established just before the Libyan uprising. According to Mneina, “the main goal of the movement is to provide comprehensive support to the global community, including the international media, by enabling their access to verified reports, sources on the ground, and photos and video footage” as well as promoting the views and perspectives of Libyan youth.

### Women’s rights in post-Gaddafi Libya

After the fall of Gaddafi in October 2011, visible progress was made in advancing Libyan women’s capacities and resources to mobilize freely. In 2012, Libya saw its first democratic election, prompting the Libyan Women’s Platform for Peace to rally around a campaign that advocated for an increase in women’s representation in parliament. In response to these efforts, the National Transitional Council (NTC) revised the electoral law to “require ‘zippered’ candidate lists for political party seats, in which male and female names had to alternate, horizontally and vertically.”<sup>[1]</sup> This ultimately resulted in women winning nearly 17% of the total seats in the constitutional assembly.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Issues-and-Analysis/The-Libyan-Youth-Movement-Acting-Today-Shaping-Tomorrow>

## Malaysia: Muslim women's group Sisters in Islam gain judicial review of 'deviants' fatwa

*Muslim women's group Sisters in Islam has gained leave for judicial review of July's fatwa declaring them 'deviants.' The case pits Sisters in Islam against the Selangor Fatwa Committee, the Selangor Islamic Religious Council and the state government in a dispute over the jurisdiction of religious courts.*



Zainah Anuar talks during the Sisters in Islam press conference in Kuala Lumpur in this October 31, 2014

The High Court in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, today granted Muslim women’s group Sisters in Islam (SIS) leave for a judicial review of a fatwa labelling the organisation as “deviants”. Justice Datuk Asmabi Mohamad dismissed the objections raised by the federal government and ruled that the case is not frivolous. The group filed for a judicial review on October 31 to challenge a gazetted fatwa in Selangor that declared the group as 'deviants' in Islam. The fatwa — which was gazetted on July 31 — was issued without the group being informed or questioned.

According to Section 13 of the Syariah Criminal Offences (Selangor) Enactment 1995, any person who gives, propagates, or disseminates any opinion concerning any issue, Islamic teaching or Islamic law contrary to any fatwa for time being in force can be fined up to RM3,000, or jailed for up to two years, or both.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/malaysia-muslim-womens-group-sisters-islam-gain-judicial-review-deviants-fatwa>

## **Feminist Groups Vision for a National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women**

*Feminist Groups and Organizations Collaborate together in order to Present their Vision for a National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women and Adopt a Holistic and Broad Perspective to Eradicate these Crimes from their Roots*

A few state institutions have taken preliminary procedures to combat violence against women in Egypt, which include announcing, a few weeks ago, the formation of a committee that is coordinated by the National Council for Women with several ministries and a small number of civil society organizations and initiatives, for the design of a national strategy to combat violence against women, which several feminist organizations and groups and a few human rights organizations have called for it since last year.

It is worth mentioning that the formation of the recent committee is regarded as a basic and important step to start the necessary procedure of combating these crimes, but at the same time, the feminist groups and organizations that called for this strategy remain extremely concerned that this committee will result in a vast shortage in the elements of the concerned strategy, and the degree to which the concerned committee will be committed to design the national strategy and its plan according to the recommendations made by feminist and human rights groups, which have borne the responsibility of making field interventions via the provision of medical, psychological and legal support to survivors of these crimes, whether in the private or public spheres, for many years, which might result in introducing a strategy that has a limited vision and is ineffective

Read more:

<http://nazra.org/en/2014/12/feminist-groups-and-organizations-collaborate-together-order-present-their-vision-national>

## **Civicus condemns draconian sentencing of two Bahraini activists**

Global civil society alliance, CIVICUS, is dismayed over the politically motivated sentences handed down this week to Bahraini human rights activists Maryam al-Khawaja and Zainab al-Khawaja. CIVICUS urges the government of Bahrain to end its relentless campaign to silence dissent in the country and release all human rights defenders imprisoned for exercising their legitimate democratic rights.

On 4 December, Zainab al-Khawaja was sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of 3,000 Bahraini Dinar (approx. 8,000 USD) on charges of “publically insulting the King” for ripping a picture of King Hamad of Bahrain. Zainab was nearly 9 months pregnant when she was arrested and imprisoned earlier this year while appearing before the High Criminal Court of Appeal in the capital, Manama.

Zainab, who is the sister of Maryam al-Khawaja and the daughter of imprisoned civil society activist Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, has repeatedly been subjected to judicial persecution for her human rights advocacy. Zanaib was released in February 2014 after spending nearly a year in prison on a number of politically motivated charges related to her peaceful advocacy work on human and democratic rights in Bahrain.

Zainab’s conviction on 4 December was preceded by the sentencing on 1 December of Maryam al-Khawaja. She was sentenced to one year in prison in absentia on specious charges of “assaulting police officers”. Maryam, who is the head of advocacy for the Gulf Center for Human Rights, was initially arrested at Manama airport on August 30th while attempting to visit her father who has been imprisoned in Bahrain since 2011.

Read more:

<http://civicus.org/index.php/en/media-centre-129/news-and-resources-127/2152-civicus-condemns-draconian-sentencing-of-two-bahraini-activists>

## GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

### Yemeni women fear Houthis are restricting freedoms



Women walk past demolished huts set on fire at Taghyeer (Change) Square in Yemen's capital Sanaa November 10, 2014.

When Yemeni Arwa Othman took a dance at the headquarters of a political party in Sanaa, she exposed the kind of deep hostility that is worrying women's rights campaigners now that Houthi rebels control the capital.

Othman presented an unusual sight in conservative Yemen, where most women are shrouded in black, but all she was doing was celebrating a national holiday last September.

Nevertheless, the prominent activist was immediately subjected to a barrage of criticism from hardline Islamists as well as supporters of the Houthi rebels, a Shi'ite group which had taken over Sanaa a few days earlier.

When Othman was selected as the new Culture Minister, Houthi activists and pro-Houthi newspapers ridiculed her. One front page headline proclaimed: "the dancing government".

Read more:

[http://www.trust.org/item/20141218144849-1dms0/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Alertnet%20Expresso%20Dec%2019&utm\\_content=Alertnet%20Expresso%20Dec%2019+CID\\_5470a0f68cbe4a5f48a90a0f675f4d04&utm\\_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm\\_term=Yemeni%20women%20fear%20Houthis%20are%20restricting%20freedoms](http://www.trust.org/item/20141218144849-1dms0/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Alertnet%20Expresso%20Dec%2019&utm_content=Alertnet%20Expresso%20Dec%2019+CID_5470a0f68cbe4a5f48a90a0f675f4d04&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Yemeni%20women%20fear%20Houthis%20are%20restricting%20freedoms)

### #16 Days: Conflict In Iraq And Syria Plays Out On Women's Bodies



*As we commemorate the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (25 November to 10 December) under the theme "let's challenge militarism and end gender-based violence", AWID speaks to Lisa Davis, Human Rights Advocacy Director at MADRE, and to Nurcan Baysal, Kurdish activist and writer for the Turkish electronic journal T24, to learn more about the sexual and other violations of women's and girls' rights with the insurgency of the self-proclaimed "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" (ISIS).*

Over the last six months, there have been horrific reports on the increasing violence in Syria and Iraq with the insurgency of ISIS. On 5 August, Vian Dakhil, an Ezidi[1] member of the Iraqi Parliament, made a plea for assistance to Ezidi people facing extermination with the Siege of Sinjar[2] by ISIS. The ethnic cleansing of religious minorities and other forms of violence occurring in Iraq, perpetrated by both State and non-state actors, were also reported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 2014. In this context of militia rule and impunity, women and girls are particularly affected by human rights violations, including being raped, kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/16-Days-Conflict-in-Iraq-and-Syria-Plays-Out-on-Women-s-Bodies>

## Turkey: Epidemic of Murders of Women Seeking Divorce

*A new kind of honor violence against women has emerged in Turkey: the murdering of women seeking divorce from their husbands.*



Muhterem Gocmen with her son

Last month on an Istanbul street, Hulya Cadirci, a 28-year old mother in the middle of divorce proceedings, was stabbed to death by her 40-year old husband in front of their child. Hulya's murder is the latest in the 287 cases that have been documented by a Turkish human rights and advocacy group "We Will Stop Women Murders."

Many of these cases were women seeking divorces; most were murdered in honor crimes by husbands or family members.

The numbers are already up from last year's, when the group documented 238 such cases, including that of Muhterem Gocmen, a 30-year old mother of two seeking a divorce from her abusive husband Serdar.

In broad daylight, Serdar walked into the hair salon where Muhterem was working and stabbed her to death. Two days previously, Serdar had beaten up Muhterem in a café.

Read more:

<http://www.clarionproject.org/news/turkey-epidemic-murders-women-seeking-divorce>

## Egypt – Continuing Challenge of Female Genital Mutilation – FGM

Perfectly healthy parts of sadly, many girls' genitals are still mutilated/cut by FGM because of obsession with female virginity.

Egyptian government figures put the rate of female genital mutilation among women ages 15 to 49 at 91 per cent. Among teenagers 15 to 17, it is 74 per cent. Unicef estimates that of the 125 million women worldwide who have undergone genital cutting in the 29 countries where it is most prevalent – mostly in Africa and the Middle East – one in five lives in Egypt.

I am a 47-year-old Egyptian woman. And I am among the fortunate few of my countrywomen whose genitals have not been cut in the name of "purity" and the control of our sexuality.

Other than the tireless Egyptian activists who for years have fought to eradicate it, very few talk about a practice that brings nothing but harm to so many girls and women. In her books, the feminist Nawal El Saadawi has long documented her own cutting at the age of 6 and her tenacious campaign against a practice that is carried out by both Muslims and Christians in Egypt.

But why aren't other prominent women speaking out by sharing their own experience of surviving genital cutting? The silence comes at a great cost.

Many international treaties designate female genital mutilation a violation of the human rights of girls and women. On October 30, the United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, announced a global campaign to end it within a generation.

Read more:

[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/12\\_14/12\\_22/122214\\_egypt.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/12_14/12_22/122214_egypt.htm)

## Egypt – “Qanun Nashaz” campaign addresses legal issue which legitimize violence against women, public and private



*As Part of the Events of the 16-Day Campaign for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Nazra For Feminist Studies & The Center For Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA) Launch “Qanun Nashaz” For The Elimination Of Legalized Violence Against Women.*

In conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the "Qanun Nashaz" Campaign was launched on November 25<sup>th</sup> 2014 by Nazra For Feminist Studies and the Center For Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA) as a part of their contribution to the annual 16-day Campaign for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which ends on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, in conjunction with the International Human Rights Day. The "Qanun Nashaz" Campaign tackles all the legal issues which legitimize violent practices against women, in both public and private spheres.

The "Qanun Nashaz" Campaign, under the motto "behind every abused Woman, there is a Law", is conducted in light of the increasing number of gang rape and sexual assault survivors, with more than 500 cases documented between June 2012 and June 2014, let alone the other violations and practices of sexual, physical, and verbal violence which women suffer on a daily basis in both public and private spheres.

Read more:

<http://nazra.org/en/2014/11/qanun-nashaz-elimination-legalized-violence-against-women>

## GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

### Saudi Cleric's Wife Shows Face on TV, Sparking Uproar



A Saudi cleric has sparked uproar by appearing on television along with his wife -- whose face was uncovered in an open challenge to strict tradition in the ultra-conservative Muslim kingdom.

Sheikh Ahmed al-Ghamedi, who has said covering the face is not a must for women under Islam, sat alongside his wife Jawaher bint Ali as she spoke to Dubai-based Saudi MBC television, in a program broadcast at the weekend.

Saudi women rarely show their faces in public.

Sporting trendy sunglasses, light makeup and varnished nails, but also wearing the traditional black abaya cloak, Ghamedi's spouse spoke of the problems their children have at school because of their father's controversial fatwas or edicts.

"Our children complain that some teachers tell them: why does your father say this and that?" she said of fatwas that have enraged zealots in the desert kingdom.

Ghamedi, who once headed the notorious religious police in the western city of Mecca, home to Islam's holiest shrine, has openly challenged the tradition that imposes niqab or face veil on women.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/159408-saudi-cleric-s-wife-shows-face-on-tv-sparking-uproar>

## Morocco - Workplace Gender Gap Widens



Women attend a manicure class at the nonprofit organization Woman's Solidarity, which helps unmarried mothers rebuild their lives and overcome social stigma, in Casablanca

In its second report on gender equality in the workplace, the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC) described the employment situation of Moroccan women as alarming.

In its 2012 report, ESEC made clear recommendations to the government to fight discrimination against women. In the NEW REPORT, released on Nov. 27, 2014, ESEC focuses on the realities of female employment and the "ineffective" laws working against women. For the second time, ESEC has made recommendations to the government. Telquel runs through it, in figures.

### Less than one in four women are employed

2.74: In millions, the total number of employed women. Of those who work, 1.03 million are employed in urban areas and 1.71 million work in rural areas.

Read more:

[http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2014/12/morocco-women-unemployment-discrimination-workplace-gender.html?utm\\_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm\\_campaign=11354a3b88-December+22+2014&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_28264b27a0-11354a3b88-102417357](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2014/12/morocco-women-unemployment-discrimination-workplace-gender.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm_campaign=11354a3b88-December+22+2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-11354a3b88-102417357)

## Saudi Arabia - case of 2 Saudi women drivers referred to terrorism court



Image made from video released by Loujain al-Hathloul, shows her driving towards the United Arab Emirates - Saudi Arabia border before her arrest on Dec. 1, 2014, in Saudi Arabia.

*Two Saudi women, including al-Hathloul, detained for nearly a month after violating the kingdom's female driving ban have been referred Thursday, Dec. 25, 2014 to a court established to try terrorism cases on charges related to comments they made on social media.*

Two Saudi women detained for nearly a month in defiance of a ban on females driving were referred on Thursday to a court established to try terrorism cases, several people close to the defendants said.

The cases of the two, Loujain al-Hathloul and Maysa al-Amoudi, were sent to the anti-terrorism court in connection to opinions they expressed in tweets and in social media, four people close to the two women told The Associated Press.

They did not elaborate on the specific charges or what the opinions were. Both women have spoken out online against the female driving ban. Activists say they fear the case is intended to send a warning to others pushing for greater rights. The four people spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear of government reprisals.

Read more:

[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/12\\_14/12\\_22/122214\\_saudi.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/12_14/12_22/122214_saudi.htm)



## Saudi-Arabia records higher number of women forced to marry relatives



Saudi Courts reported an increase in “**tahjeer**” cases where the male relative of a woman strikes an agreement with her guardian to marry her without consultation and she is then banned from marrying anyone else, Al-Hayat daily reported.

Courts in the kingdom confirmed that there were nine cases of tahjeer during the last two years, three of them in the last 40 days.

Khalid al-Fakhry, the general-secretary of the National Society for Human Rights, said tahjeer was a crime against Islamic, international and national law.

“In fact, it is a form of human trafficking where the victim’s freedom, identity and rights are robbed from her,” said Fakhry.

“A woman who raises a tahjeer case in court is one rejecting a non-Islamic tradition in which she is victimized due to the ignorance of society,” he said.

“These cases are usually raised before a marriage contract is about to be signed.

“The woman would go to the court and report that she is a victim of tahjeer and her opinion and consent to the marriage were never obtained.”

Read more:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/12/07/Saudi-Arabia-sees-higher-number-of-women-forced-to-marry-relatives.html>

## RESOURCES & CALLS

### BOOKS & REPORTS

## New Guide Takes Aim at Violence Against Women and Girls



*The Violence Against Women and Girls Resource Guide, published by the World Bank Group, the Global Women's Institute at George Washington University, and the Inter-American Development Bank, offers information on the characteristics and consequences of VAWG, as well as guidance on integrating VAWG prevention and response into policies and legislation, sector programs and projects.*

Violence against women and girls poses a major obstacle to ending poverty, but development agencies and international financial institutions are uniquely positioned to tackle this global epidemic, according to a new resource guide released Wednesday.

“Violence against women and girls is an outrage,” World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim said. “It demands urgent attention as a violation of fundamental human rights. Along with terrible individual suffering, it also imposes steep, avoidable economic costs on families, communities, and economies—helping keep some of the world’s most vulnerable people in poverty.”

Read more:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/12/03/new-guide-takes-aim-at-violence-against-women-and-girls>

## 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence 2014 - Resource Highlights

This update highlights a handful of excellent resources linked to this year's 16 days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign theme - militarism and gender-based violence.

The 16 Days Campaign annually runs from November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to December 10 Human Rights Day, which rightfully stresses that gender-based violence is an international human rights violation.

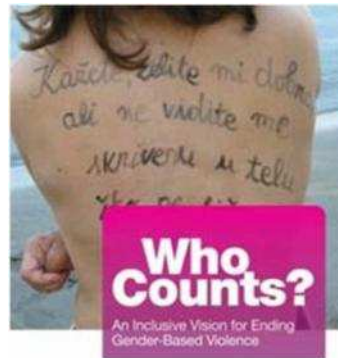
In the lead up to, and during, this year's campaign activities, participants highlighted the systemic nature of gender-based violence and militarism which encourages inequality and discrimination and prioritises weapons spending over funding for quality education and healthcare and safe public spaces. The culture of militarism builds on and protects systems of power by controlling dissent and using violence to settle economic, political and social disputes. Militarism draws on and perpetuates patriarchal models of political, economic, and social domination of people by a small number of elites and privileges violent masculinity as acceptable behaviour. The 16 Days Campaign focus on the intersections of gender-based violence and militarism is an effort to work toward a more equitable and peaceful world.

Six excellent resources are featured in this update but for more high quality resources on the theme please type '16days2014' into the search box. There are a number of resources available in English, French and Spanish.

Read more:

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender/monthly-collections/16-days-of-activism-against-gender-based-violence-2014/16-days-of-activism-against-gender-based-violence-2014-resource-highlights#.VLAkbnKUfRZ>

## An Inclusive Vision for Ending Gender-Based Violence



*What is gender-based violence? Who experiences it? What and who gets left out of mainstream definitions? The groups Mama Cash funds are not only committed to ending violence, but are also redefining and challenging the very definition of what violence is, including who experiences it. To capture the lessons from this ground-breaking work, Mama Cash has developed a report that documents the work of 27 groups around the world.*

*'Who Counts? An Inclusive Vision for Ending Gender-Based Violence' highlights the successful strategies activists are using to address instances of gender-based violence, which takes many different forms. Three examples of these strategies are:*

### **Arts and Direct Action**

The use of creative, visual approaches to activism in public – such as art, street theatre and flash mobs – can be both memorable and reach beyond the usual audiences. In addition, it sends a powerful message that people who are often invisible have a right to public space.

Read more:

[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/12\\_14/12\\_01/120114\\_ending.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/12_14/12_01/120114_ending.htm)

For a direct link to report:

<http://mamacash.org/content/uploads/2013/06/Mama-Cash-report-Who-Counts.pdf>

## Age immaterial – Women over 50 in the workplace - report

More women over the age of fifty are working than ever before but the generation of women who blazed a trail for women's equality in the workplace are still struggling to get a fair deal. Low pay, discrimination, the pressures of juggling caring responsibilities and paid work, and difficulties accessing training opportunities are the key issues facing older women at work. This report considers how things can be improved. The trade union movement is well-placed to speak up on behalf of these women. The caricature of the average trade union member may still be a middle-aged, white man in a donkey

jacket on a picket line, but the reality is somewhat different. The typical trade union member today is more likely to be a woman than a man, and trade union density amongst women is greatest among the 50–59 age group. This is a group of members whose voices all too often go unheard. The bottom line is that this generation of women has been let down. They entered the workforce in the 1970s or 80s. They were the first generation protected by equal pay and sex discrimination laws and the first to have rights to paid maternity leave. Many returned to work after having children and struggled to combine work with childcare at a time when few employers offered flexible working. But after decades of hard work, many of these women feel short-changed.

Read more:

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/publications/age-immaterial-women-over-50-workplace-tuc-report>

For a direct link to report:

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/Age Immaterial Women Over 50 Report 2014 LR.pdf>

## Coalition of Syrian Women for Democracy



The Coalition of Syrian Women for Democracy launched the report: *GENDERED CONSTITUTION BUILDING PROCESS FOR SYRIA* during its conference on 5-6 December 2014. The report provides gender entry points to a democratic constitution in Syria and lessons learned from constitution making processes in the MENA region. It is a result of several months of collaborative work of the Coalition of Syrian Women for Democracy, bringing together diverse groups of Syrian activists, mobilized for a constitution building process to support a non-violent transition towards democracy. The report integrates the results of those numerous events, gatherings and discussions. It draws attention to challenges and highlights good practices related to the institutionalization of women's rights and gender equality principles and values in the constitution. It also emphasizes the efforts of women's movements to include and/or preserve women's rights and gender equality as founding principles in democratic constitutions, and as core issues in times of transition.

Read more:

[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/12\\_14/12\\_15/1215\\_14\\_syria.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/12_14/12_15/1215_14_syria.htm)

For a direct link to report:

[http://www.efi-ife.org/sites/default/files/merged\\_document\\_4.pdf](http://www.efi-ife.org/sites/default/files/merged_document_4.pdf)

## Escape from hell - torture, sexual slavery in Islamic state captivity in Iraq - report



A girl in Khakhe camp who was a victim of abuse by the armed group calling itself Islamic State

*“Hundreds of Yezidi women and girls have had their lives shattered by the horrors of sexual violence and sexual slavery in IS captivity.”*

Torture, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, suffered by women and girls from Iraq’s Yezidi minority who were abducted by the armed group calling itself the Islamic State (IS),

*highlights the savagery of IS rule, said Amnesty International in a new briefing today.*

“Escape from Hell - Torture, Sexual Savery in Islamic State Captivity in Iraq”, provides an insight into the horrifying abuse suffered by hundreds and possibly thousands of Yezidi women and girls who have been forcibly married, “sold” or given as “gifts” to IS fighters or their supporters. Often, captives were forced to convert to Islam.

Read more:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iraq-yezidi-women-and-girls-face-harrowing-sexual-violence-2014-12-23>

For a direct link to report:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE14/021/2014/en/5243cb6b-09fe-455d-b2df-f6ce34e450f4/mde140212014en.pdf>

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