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Press Release and Ongoing Mobilization Win Victory against Child Marriage Loopholes in Moroccan Family Law

The tireless advocacy work of WLP's partner in Morocco, l'Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), together with the Spring of Dignity Coalition, recently achieved a major victory in stopping a bill that would have eased restrictions and legalized loopholes to permit child marriage and other discriminatory practices. ADFM's intensive mobilization efforts, including the following press release, raised awareness on the devastating human rights consequences of the bill for Moroccan women and pressured the Moroccan government to return the bill to the legislative body for review.

To our great disappointment we at the Spring of Dignity Coalition have learned that The Committee on Justice Legislation and Human Rights of the Advisory Council voted Wednesday January 13 to amend Article 16 of Law 03-70 of the Family Legal Code related to Marriage with another extension to the “transitional period” so we can listen to even more arguments regarding this topic.

We wish to express our view that this vote to amend Article 16 Paragraph 4 with another extension on top of what has already been a five year wait defies logic. The objective of the five year wait was to use all possible means to regularize the situation of these couples. This is pointed out in the second, third, and fourth paragraph of Article 16 of the Family Legal Code, which provides the ability to accelerate the process of bringing undocumented marriages into a standard legal framework.

Read more:

<http://www.learningpartnership.org/lib/press-release-and-mobilization-win-victory-against-child-marriage-moroccan-family-law>

Egyptian women take to social media to expose harassers



Girls walk past members of the riot police standing guard near a protest against sexual harassment in front of the opera house in Cairo, June 14, 2014

Egyptian women have been using a number of hashtags — among them #Idon'tFeelSafeOnTheStreet, #AntiHarassment and #ExposeHarasser — on social networking sites to speak up about the daily sexual harassment they experience. These campaigns are part of an effort to expose harassers and break the silence surrounding their crimes, which are haunting women in Egypt. Women have tweeted myriad incidents along with advocating the courage to expose and confront harassers.

Nancy Atieh, 20, published a post on Facebook Jan. 12 in an attempt to expose a man in his 50s who regularly takes the bus from a station downtown, during which time he molests females. She took and posted a picture of him to warn her colleagues who transit the same station. "Photographing harassers and exposing them is the best way to confront them," she wrote.

Read more:

http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/01/egypt-women-sexual-harrassment-social-media.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm_campaign=d77dd9fcb1-January 20 2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-d77dd9fcb1-102417357#

Israel's First-Ever Ultra-Orthodox Women's Political Party Makes Bold Debut



The first-ever Israeli political party dedicated to ultra-Orthodox women, was unveiled Monday. Heading the party, called “B’Zhutan: Haredi Women Making Change” is Ruth Colian, 33, a veteran social activist and feminist who declared that this was a “historic” step in a mission to “guarantee representation in the Knesset for ultra-Orthodox women.”

At a Tel Aviv press conference, looking determined but nervous, Colian made the announcement flanked by two other young women who had accepted invitations to run on her list in the upcoming elections - Noa Erez and Keren Muzan.

She said that her party’s goal was to represent “all women” particularly the underprivileged and single mothers who “have suffered at the hands of politicians who have run for office again and again promising to help and make their lives better and nothing changed” and who live on meager paychecks and face empty refrigerators, and those who suffered from domestic abuse or are struggling against the religious establishment.

“There are many walls of fear for Haredi women within their communities. They have nowhere to turn in the Knesset.”

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/01_15/01_26/0126_15_isreal.htm

The Absence of Women from Middle East Policy Debates: An Update



Our article Tuesday on The Washington Post’s Monkey Cage blog, The mysterious absence of women from Middle East policy debates, garnered significant attention and, we hope, generated discussion within Washington’s think tanks and media organizations about how to advance the goal of gender parity in all our work.

Many people asked for the data that underlie our article’s claim that 65% of last year’s Middle East events at six major think tanks lacked any women speakers. We present that data below. It was compiled, we stress, from public sources (websites) and thus does not include many other events that were invitation-only. We invite our fellows at Washington think tanks, especially those whose events are almost all by invitation, to help us build this public dataset as a means of auditing our collective performance over time – starting with 2014 and from now on. And, of course, we are open to seeing any evidence that would improve accuracy or correct empirical errors in the data shown below.

Read more:

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/01/23-cofman-wittes-women-absent-from-middle-east-policy-debates>

Global momentum means more women move into management

New study shows positive link between female leadership and business performance and urges boost from current 5 per cent of women in top positions.

While women are still under-represented in top management, the number of women in senior and middle management positions has increased over the last 20 years, a new study by the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities finds.

According to "Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum", in 80 of the 108 countries for which ILO data is available, the proportion of women managers has increased during this period.

"Our research is showing that women's ever increasing participation in the labor market has been the biggest engine of global growth and competitiveness," says Deborah France-Massin, Director of the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities.

"An increasing number of studies are also demonstrating positive links between women's participation in top decision making teams and structures and business performance. But there is a long way to go before we achieve true gender equality in the workplace, especially when it comes to top management positions."

Only 5 per cent or less of the CEOs of the world's largest corporations are women. The larger the company, the less likely the head will be a woman.

Read more:

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_333678/lang-en/index.htm

Domestic servitude: Jonalyn's story

An estimated 21 million people globally are employed as forced labor. Many of those workers end up in domestic servitude. Working in various roles, including as housekeepers, nannies and cooks, they are often housed with their employers, unable to leave because of debts incurred for their travel and because their identity papers are withheld by their employers.



Jonalyn left her home in the Philippines and travelled to the Middle East to work as a housekeeper for a family in Lebanon. For nearly a year, she suffered severe forms of psychological and physical torture, as well as sexual abuse, at the hands of her employers.

Recounting her experiences, Jonalyn described having chlorine-based detergent poured over her body and of being subjected to electric shocks with a stun-gun. On another occasion, she said she was imprisoned on her own for ten days. She was threatened constantly with death.

Jonalyn eventually made contact with the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC), an NGO supported by the UN Slavery Fund that manages a safe house for migrant workers who have suffered abuse by their employers. CLMC provided her with medical care, basic needs assistance, trauma counselling and legal aid.

Read more:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DomesticServitudeJonalynsstory.aspx>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

IS Executing 'Educated Women' in new Wave of Horror Says U.N.



The U.N. on Tuesday decried numerous executions of civilians in Iraq by the Islamic State group, warning that educated women appeared to be especially at risk.

The jihadist group is showing a "monstrous disregard for human life" in the areas it controls in Iraq, the U.N. human rights office said.

The group, which controls large swathes of territory in Iraq and in neighboring war-ravaged Syria, last week published pictures of the "crucifixions" of two men accused of being bandits, and of a woman being stoned to death, allegedly for adultery.

Numerous other women have also reportedly been executed recently in IS-controlled areas, including Mosul, spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani told reporters.

She said "educated, professional women, particularly women who have run as candidates in elections for public office, seem to be particularly at risk."

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/163935-is-executing-educated-women-in-new-wave-of-horror-says-u-n>

Egypt FGM trial convicts doctor of manslaughter



Opponents of FGM were dismayed when Raslan Fadl was acquitted in November of charges relating to the death of 13-year-old Suhair al-Bataa.

But after an appeal, a court in the Nile Delta city of Mansoura sentenced him to more than two years in prison.

The campaign group Equality Now called the ruling a "monumental victory".

Although FGM was banned in Egypt six years ago, it remains widespread.

'Extreme violence'

Suhair al-Bataa, who lived in small farming community on the outskirts of Mansoura, died in 2013.

Prosecutors argued that she was forced to undergo FGM by her father.

Fadl denied carrying out the procedure, saying he had only treated her for warts and that her death had been caused by an allergic reaction to penicillin.

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30983027>

Lebanese women not safe despite domestic violence law

The Lebanese parliament passed a new law on domestic violence April 1. The idea for such a law was born in 2007 in the offices of the group Kafa [Enough] Violence Against Women. The project for a law protecting women against violence brought together 64 nongovernmental organizations, which submitted the draft to the government in 2009. Five years and two revisions later, the new law little resembles the original text. The wording used in the final draft says it all — “domestic violence,” not “violence against women.”

Two days after the vote on the law, Human Rights Watch declared the legislation “good, but incomplete.” Maya Ammar, Kafa's media officer, shared this opinion, telling Al-Monitor, “This is a big step for women's rights, but it is not enough.” According to Ammar, the only real breakthrough is that the law simplifies some legal mechanisms. Among the undesirable changes made to the original text is the provision involving marital rape, which is now “marital rights by force” and is condemned only if it involves physical evidence of violence.

After six months of adapting the association's work to the new law, Ammar came to the conclusion that the implication of the law is not so bad. She said, “Most of the judges are fair in their decisions, protecting the children as well, which is good.” Regardless, Ammar still thinks improvements are necessary.

Read more:

http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/lebanon-law-domestic-violence-women.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm_campaign=bd37d1cf67-January_01_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-bd37d1cf67-102417357#

Kuwait Policeman Death Penalty Upheld for Raping Filipina



Kuwait's appeals court on Wednesday upheld the death sentence of a policeman for “abducting, raping and attempting to murder” a Filipina woman.

The lower court condemned the policeman, identified only by the initials Y.M, to death last June. He can still challenge the ruling before the Supreme Court.

The policeman had arrested the woman after finding that her residence permit had expired, according to the court papers.

He took her to a deserted area where he stabbed her in the neck and raped her after she refused to have sex with him.

The policeman left her for dead in a pool of blood, but returned and stabbed her several more times when she moved.

The Filipina survived and crawled to a nearby road where a passerby took her to hospital.

About 180,000 Filipinos, many of them women employed as domestic helpers, work and live in oil-rich Kuwait, making up the fourth largest foreign community in the Gulf emirate.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/167063-kuwait-policeman-death-penalty-upheld-for-raping-filipina>

Monitor: Syria “adulteress” survives militant stoning



Militants carried out the punishment and “stoned her until they thought she had died.” But just as they had stopped pelting her with stones, the woman stood up and tried to flee.

A Syrian woman stoned by the militant Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) group for alleged adultery and left for dead has miraculously walked away from the brutal punishment, a monitor said Friday.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the militant group sentenced the woman to be “stoned for adultery” in the town of Raqqa, the ISIS stronghold in northern Syria.

Militants carried out the punishment and “stoned her until they thought she had died,” said the Britain-based monitor.

But just as they had stopped pelting her with stones, the woman stood up and tried to flee. “An ISIS militant was about to open fire at her when an Islamist jurist intervened and stopped him saying it was God’s will that she did not die,” said the Observatory, without specifying when it happened.

The ISIS jurist told the woman she can walk free but that she must “repent”.

Read more:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/01/30/Monitor-Syria-adulteress-survives-militant-stoning.html>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Church of England Consecrates First Female Bishop



The Church of England ended centuries of male-only leadership on Monday as Libby Lane became its first female bishop at a grand ceremony in York cathedral, despite fierce opposition from traditionalists.

Dozens of clergymen crowded around to lay their hands on the 48-year-old's head and pronounced the prayer making her a new bishop in front of 2,000 people.

The congregation broke into applause and cheers echoed through the Gothic cathedral in northern England, although a lone heckler had earlier briefly disrupted the ceremony.

“Send down the Holy Spirit on your servant Libby for the office and work of a bishop in your Church,” Archbishop of York John Sentamu prayed.

Lane, dressed in black, white and violet vestments, swore oaths of allegiance and canonical obedience during the two-hour ceremony also attended by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the spiritual leader of the Church of England.

When asked whether they wanted her to become bishop, the congregation responded “It is!”, but one man was heard shouting: “No, it’s not in the Bible!”

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/164757-church-of-england-consecrates-first-female-bishop>

Lebanon: Laws Discriminate Against Women

Lebanon's religion-based personal status laws discriminate against women across the religious spectrum and don't guarantee their basic rights, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. Lebanon has 15 separate personal status laws for its recognized religions but no civil code covering issues such as divorce, property rights, or care of children. These laws are administered by autonomous religious courts with little or no government oversight, and often issue rulings that violate women's human rights.

The 114-page report, "Unequal and Unprotected: Women's Rights Under Lebanon's Religious Personal Status Laws," found that, across all religions, personal status laws erect greater barriers for women than men who wish to terminate unhappy or abusive marriages, initiate divorce proceedings, ensure their rights concerning their children after divorce, or secure pecuniary rights from a former spouse. The laws also violate children's rights, most significantly the need to consider their best interests in all judicial decisions concerning their welfare.

"Not only are Lebanese citizens of various religions treated unequally under the law, but women are treated unfairly across the board, and their rights and security go unprotected," said Nadim Houry, deputy Middle East and North Africa director. "Passage of an optional civil marriage code, alongside badly needed reforms to existing personal status laws and religious courts, are long overdue."

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Issues-and-Analysis/Lebanon-Laws-Discriminate-Against-Women>

Two Women Stoned to Death for 'Adultery' by ISIS in Syria



ISIS militants have publicly executed a female activist for criticizing the group in a Facebook post. (Representational image).

Unconfirmed reports claim that in at least one case, the woman was sentenced to death as her new husband found that she was not a virgin.

Both incidents of death by stoning have been reported from Al Raqqa Province.

"The Islamic State carried out, for the second time in 24 hours, the punishment of Al Rajem (stoning to death for adultery) against another woman in the city of Al Raqqa in a square near the Municipal Stadium," an official from NGO Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) stated.

Read more:

<http://www.ibtimes.co.in/two-women-stoned-death-adultery-syria-by-isis-604894>

Syria: Extremists Restricting Women's Rights



Harsh Rules on Dress, Work, School

Syrian refugees stand in line as they receive humanitarian aid in Darashakran refugee camp, on the outskirts of Arbil in Iraq Kurdistan region on December 28, 2013.

Certain extremist armed opposition groups are imposing strict and discriminatory rules on women and girls that have no basis in Syrian law, Human Rights Watch said today. The harsh rules that some groups are administering in areas under their control in northern and northeastern Syria violate women's and girls' human rights and limit their ability to carry out essential daily activities.

Human Rights Watch interviewed 43 refugees from Syria in Iraqi Kurdistan and conducted telephone interviews with two refugees from Syria in Turkey in November and December 2013. The refugees interviewed said that the extremist armed groups Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) have enforced their interpretation of Sharia, or Islamic law, by requiring women and girls to wear headscarves (*hijabs*) and full-length robes (*abayas*), and threatening to punish those who do not comply.

Read more:

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/01/13/syria-extremists-restricting-women-s-rights>

Arab Gulf States Women – Modernization and Marginalization – Analysis – Variance by country



Major Mariam al-Mansouri of the United Arab Emirates' Armed Forces in her fighter cockpit

Arab Gulf women are usually perceived by many feminists and commentators as one homogenous group.

However, despite certain common conditions for women in the region, rights enjoyed by women differ from one Gulf country to another.

Lujain Al-Hathlol, a Saudi activist, was arrested Monday night at the Saudi border after she arrived driving from the United Arab Emirates, in defiance of a ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, the UAE celebrated its first female F-16 fighter pilot, Major Mariam Al-Mansouri and Kuwait has Sheikha Lubna bint Khalid bin Sultan Al-Qasimi holding the post of minister for foreign trade.

In contrast, Yemeni women need the permission of their husbands or guardians to travel.

Ahram Online examines the diverse realities of Gulf women.

Read more:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/117377/World/Region/Gulf-women-Modernisation-vs-marginalisation.aspx>

The Cost of Inequality in Women's work: Subsidizing the economy at the tune of trillions

From the 1% vs the 99% of the Occupy movement and Oxfam; to the World Bank's call to focus on the trajectory of the income of the bottom 40%; or the increasingly touted Palma ratio, debates on inequality are back. And yet, there is a group systematically omitted within such debates: women – and in particular women in poor countries.

All over the world, women's work contributes to growth, sustainable development, and the health and wellbeing of society. Yet by virtually every measure women are in the "wronged" percent. ActionAid new research found that being in the wrong side of the equation costs women in poor countries USD 9 trillion a year. Globally, the cost stands at USD 17 trillion.

This is first and foremost a scandalous violation of the rights of billions of women. But gender inequality in work not only has consequences for women; the functioning of the economy relies on women's work. Women's labour – in and outside the home – is vital to sustainable development, and to the wellbeing of society.

Women's equality resonates well in mainstream development debates. However, the focus is often on how opportunities for women in poor countries can be improved through micro-finance, or better access to land or property, or job opportunities. Some of these are necessary policy and legal measures. But they are not sufficient.

Read more:

<http://www.rightingfinance.org/?p=1133>

What Silicon Valley Thinks of Women



On a spring afternoon last year at an outdoor café in San Francisco, two denizens of the tech community sketched out their strategy for a startup. Like most 28-year-olds in Silicon Valley, they had smarts and dreams. One was a passionate, fast-talking New Yorker, the other a shy computer whiz from Syracuse, New York, and together they formed the classic hacker-hustler team behind many of the valley's Next Big Things.

They had been emailing each other about the idea for months, with growing conviction of its awesome potential. It addressed a well-known problem, one that afflicts the tech industry but also banking, media, advertising and film. Corporations needed it. Individuals would love it. It might even be disruptive, as they say. That afternoon, over lunch in the California sun, they committed to an ambitious business plan. That summer, they would keep their day jobs at media and advertising companies, but devote many off-hours and weekends to the startup. The savvy talker, who had worked in communications at Citigroup and Thomson Reuters, joined professional clubs, sought out older advisers, arranged meetings and worked at creating buzz that just might pique investors.

Read more:

http://www.newsweek.com/2015/02/06/what-silicon-valley-thinks-women-302821.html?utm_medium=email&utm_source=emea-email&utm_campaign=

RESOURCES & CALLS

BOOKS & REPORTS

Women in Business and Management: Gaining momentum

This report brings together available data and ILO statistics to provide a comprehensive, up to-date and global picture of women in the business world and in management positions.

As women overtake men in education, they are running a third of the world's businesses. However, women business owners are concentrated in small and micro-businesses, and still only 5 per cent or less of CEOs of the largest global corporations are women. This report highlights the business case for gender diversity and the obstacles women still face as well as ways to move ahead, underlining the fact that women's presence in the labour market is increasingly significant for economic growth and development at both enterprise and national levels. It advocates for a greater role for national business organizations, which can assist their member companies with putting in place policies and measures to recruit and retain talent. The report also shows that women still have to deal with a number of hurdles to reach positions as CEOs and company board members. While women have advanced in business and management, they continue to be shut out of higher level economic decision-making despite activism in the last decade to smash the "glass ceiling".

Read more:

http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_316450/lang--en/index.htm

For a direct link to report:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_316450.pdf

Sexual violence in conflict – what use is the law?



Sexual violence in wars rarely leads to prosecutions

Through conflict after conflict, sexual violence persists, not just as individual crimes but as a weapon of war, from the Balkans to the Congo, from Liberia and Sierra Leone to present day Iraq. It persists, says Madeleine Rees, the secretary general of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, because it's effective.

"It works in conflict," she told a meeting at London's Chatham House, "because it helps destroy and tear apart communities. And the reason it works to tear apart communities is to do with our social mores. It does work and if you want to win a war, then you do it."

Working to prevent it and cope with its effects is a dauntingly wide-ranging task, which entails tackling deep-seated attitudes at the core of societies, as well as the provision of medical help, emotional support and legal advice to the victims.

Read more:

<http://www.irinnews.org/report/101068/sexual-violence-in-conflict-what-use-is-the-law>

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022



Domestic and family violence and sexual assault are crimes that must be stopped. In Australia, around one in three women has experienced physical violence, and almost one in five has experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.

That is why the Commonwealth, state and territory governments worked with the community to develop a 12-year *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan).

Released in 2011, the National Plan explains what we are doing to reduce violence against women and their children.

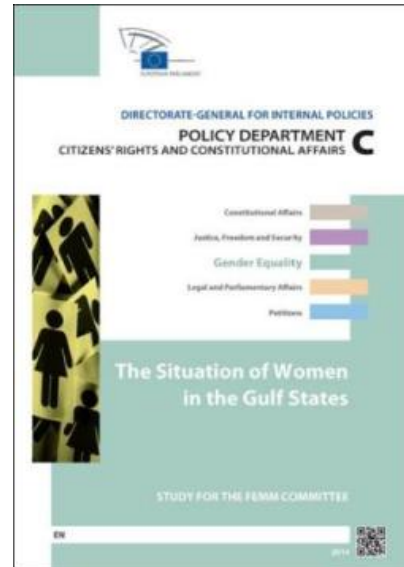
Read more:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>

For a direct link to document:

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2014/national_plan1.pdf

The "Situation of Women in the Gulf States"



The Study on the "Situation of Women in the Gulf States" examines women's rights and gender equality studies (Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). On one hand the document highlights similarities and differences among the eight countries in access to education, economic and political participation. On the other hand, it analyses the overall situation of gender discrimination in law and in society. A series of recommendations are addressed to EU institutions, suggesting how EU policies and instruments could be developed to support women's rights and enhance gender equality in the Gulf States and in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/01_15/01_05/010515_eu.htm

For a direct link to study:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/509985/IPOL_STU\(2014\)509985_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/509985/IPOL_STU(2014)509985_EN.pdf)

Gender-equitable public investment: how time-use surveys can help

This briefing argues that macroeconomic policy often fails to recognize the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women, and as a result reinforces both gender and income inequalities. The author argues that by providing detailed information on how this burden is unequally distributed across gender, class, ethnicity and other socioeconomic characteristics, time-use data can help in guiding more equitable allocations of public resources and promoting government budget priorities that recognize the importance of unpaid work, both for the economy and for human wellbeing. The briefing makes several policy recommendations.

Read more:

<http://www.eldis.org/go/latest-news/news&id=70345&type=Document#.VNysyOaUfRY>

For a direct link to brief:

http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/5519/AD_ID298_PB82_GenderEquInvest_online.pdf?sequence=1

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