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A WLP Egypt statement condemning women's exclusion from governorship

WLP Egypt/FWID joined 17 Egyptian human rights organizations in releasing the statement "The Need to Appoint Women in the Upcoming Governor Cycle", which condemns Egyptian Minister of State for Local Development Adel Labeeb's announcement, stating that the country's new governors will not include any women and that it will be efficient to assign women as "assistants and representatives" until they are better trained. In their response, FWID and the other signatories warned of the implications this decision will have on women's status in all areas of local development, as well as on society as a whole. The participation of women as governors would: strengthen the presence of women in decision-making positions at the local level; express women's views in local development programs so they would better serve women's priorities and needs; and improve the quality of services provided at the local level to support the most marginalized and vulnerable groups through the integration of gender issues in Ministry of Local Development plans, strategies, and policies. The signatories demanded that Minister Adel Labeeb abide by the Egyptian Constitution's 11th clause stating that "The State shall take measures to ensure appropriate representation of women in parliaments, as prescribed by law, and to ensure women's right to hold public office positions and functions of senior management in the state as well as in judicial bodies, without discrimination against them ". They also demand that women be included as governors in the upcoming governor cycle as part of the

Read more:

<http://www.learningpartnership.org/lib/wlp-egypt-statement-condemning-womens-exclusion-governorships>

Turkey - mobilizing religious leaders to combat violence against women in turkey



Violence against Women (VAW) is a violation of human rights rooted in inequality between women and men. Resistance to combating VAW in many Muslim majority countries is ingrained in both the dominant patriarchal and the conventional religious norms. For many years Muslim women have remained silent, and nearly all interpretations of gender relations have been formulated by Muslim men and support the dominant norms. Turkey is no exception.

According to the 2009 results of "National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey," 2 out of 5 women have been exposed to physical violence by their husbands or partners at least once in their lifetime. Violence against women became part of the public agenda in Turkey in the mid-1980s when women's NGOs ran campaigns, established shelters, and initiated local training programs. Several interventions took place on VAW to raise the awareness of the general public, the decision makers, journalists, service providers, and community leaders.

Read more:

<http://thewip.net/2014/08/14/mobilizing-religious-leaders-to-combat-violence-against-women-in-turkey/>

New feminist leadership web portal offers online home to all generations of activists



WELDD feminist leadership training participants show their power, Cairo 2013

Women's Resource Centre, the Institute for Women's Empowerment (IWE), and Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) have today announced the launch of a new feminist leadership web portal as part of their Women's Empowerment and Leadership Development for Democratization (WELDD) program. The portal will act as a virtual pathway to feminist activists, organizations, and dreamers of a gender-just and egalitarian world. The portal is a space to share useful resources, a forum for sharing experiences and holding discussions and debates about how to nurture feminist leadership that is transformative and sustainable. WELDD is committed to Global South knowledge production, and will hold a space for theoretical/conceptual explorations emerging from Muslim majority contexts in Arabic, Bahasa, English, French and Urdu.

The WELDD program is a joint initiative of Shirkat Gah in Pakistan, IWE in Hong Kong, and WLUML. WELDD is building capacity for transformative inter-generational feminist leadership across the world, strengthening the next generation of grassroots activists and learning from them, linking women from some twenty countries including: Egypt, the Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, and Tunisia.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/new-feminist-leadership-web-portal-offers-online-home-all-generations-activists>

MENA GAD EBRIEF / Issue 148 - September 2014

Women voices must stay alive in ISIS – controlled regions



Iraqi refugees finding safety in Dohok in August 2014 in the semiautonomous region of Kurdistan during the siege by the extremist group called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. The refugees had fled Shangal, in the region.

Jetteke van der Schatte Olivier, who works with womens rights organizations in conflict areas, maintains regular contact with people living in the vast region that ISIS has captured, an area that the United States, the Kurdish pesh merga military in northern Iraq and the Iraqi military have been hammering at the last few weeks. Van der Schatte Olivier is a program officer for Women on the Frontline, an initiative of the international nonprofit organization Hivos, based in The Hague, to support womens participation in the political process in Middle East and North African countries.

Speaking with PassBlue in August, van der Schatte Olivier, who was in Iraq in July, said that womens safety and freedom have significantly deteriorated since ISIS took over and that rape is being used as a weapon of war.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/womens-voices-must-stay-alive-isis-controlled-regions>

I engage

"The course was more than a breath of fresh air to the mind and the heart - it felt more like a journey, bringing you finally back home."

The Musawah Course Islam & Gender Equality and Justice (I-nGEJ) is designed for women's and human rights activists from Muslim countries and communities throughout the world who wish to play a critical role in building a tradition of public debate on Islam, and shaping a public discourse that recognizes equality and justice for Muslim women. It addresses the knowledge gap of participants with no formal or traditional education on Islam, and who are keen to understand the differences and diversity of Qur'anic interpretations and juristic opinions, and the conceptual tools that exist within the tradition that makes reform possible in Islam.

The Course helps build the knowledge and courage of participants to critically speak out on the impact of laws, policies and practices justified in the name of Islam, and their impact in particular on women's rights and fundamental liberties. It is Musawah's hope that the Course will contribute to building a public voice of women leaders demanding for an alternative understanding of Islam, one that recognizes equality and justice in the context of changing times and circumstances.

History and development

The 2-week Short Course - Understanding Islam from a Rights Perspective - was developed by Sisters in Islam (SIS) in Malaysia as a result of many years of its engagement with activists globally who expressed an urgent need to better understand Islam.

Read more:

<http://www.musawah.org/i-engage>

WLP Training Supports Soulaliyate Women to Influence National Dialogue



Soulaliyate women trained by WLP Morocco/ADFM strongly participated in the country's National Dialogue, "The Collective Land: For a Sustainable Human Development."

Morocco's Ministry of Interior is implementing the Dialogue to discuss enhancing and preserving the 15 million hectares of collective land and the improvement of the management of Soulaliyate tribes with traditional ownership of these lands.

Through previous WLP Morocco/ADFM trainings, Soulaliyate women significantly improved their communication and advocacy skills, and are actively shaping the National Dialogue. At a recent Regional National Dialogue meeting, the training participants raised awareness of the specific needs of Soulaliyate women, and provided concrete recommendations based on the specificities of their land and communities, which were included in the meeting's official reports.

Facing a panel of senior officials and male representatives of the tribes – a cohort with a history of opposition to change in the status of women – one trainee stated strongly...

Read more:

<http://www.learningpartnership.org/women-land-rights-morocco-soulaliyate>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Saudi woman to be lashed for criticizing police



A Saudi judge has upheld a sentence of a month in prison and 50 lashes for a businesswoman convicted of insulting members of the morality police during an argument, the local Al-Medina newspaper reported Sunday.

Incidents of heavy-handed behavior by the morality police have come under growing criticism on social media from inside the kingdom in recent years, straining relations between Saudi citizens and the official body. The appeals court in Mecca upheld the sentence, passed by a district court in Jiddah, after the woman was found guilty of “cursing the morality police” and calling them “liars,” the Arabic-language daily reported.

It said the patrol had entered her cafe to check there were no breaches of morality or other laws in the conservative Muslim kingdom, and that some of her employees had then run away because they were breaking immigration rules.

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Aug-18/267521-saudi-woman-to-be-lashed-for-criticizing-police.ashx#axzz3AiciL4Kd>

Yazidi girl tells of escape from Islamic state kidnappers



When Adeba Shaker arrived at a house in Raabia, Iraq, after being kidnapped by Islamic State militants last month, one of her captors received a phone call.

A few moments later all five men in the apartment picked up their guns and stormed out.

Shaker, a 14-year-old girl from the Yazidi ethnic minority, heard trucks leaving the property and then silence. For the first time in 20 days she and another girl being held with her were alone with no guards, and the door was unlocked.

Islamic State militants had trafficked Shaker from her village in the northeast Iraq region of Sinjar to the Syrian border and presented her as a "gift" to fighters on the front line. She was to be converted to Islam and forcibly married to one of them.

"When [the militants] left us I panicked, I didn't know what to do. I saw a bag full of cell phones and I called my brother," Shaker told Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from a camp for internally displaced people in Iraq.

Read more:

<http://www.trust.org/item/20140903115729-8e114/?source=jt>

Iraq – Isis militants storm village of Kocho – kill hundreds of yazidi men, abduct women and children



A Yazidi Iraqi woman sits with her children at the Bajid Kandala camp near the Tigris River, where they took refuge after fleeing advances by Islamic State jihadists.

Islamic extremists in Iraq killed 80 Yazidi men and abducted their wives and children, officials and eyewitnesses said Saturday, insisting the religious community is still at risk after a week of U.S. and Iraqi airstrikes on the militants.

Airstrikes meanwhile targeted insurgents around Iraq's largest dam, which was captured by the Islamic State extremist group earlier this month, according to nearby residents. It was not immediately clear who carried out the strikes.

The U.S. began launching airstrikes against the Islamic State extremist group a week ago, in part to prevent the massacre of tens of thousands of Yazidis stranded on a northern mountaintop. After most were able to escape with the help of Kurdish fighters, President Barack Obama took credit for alleviating the threat of genocide.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/08_14/08_11/081114_iraq.htm

Turkey – over 91,000 underage Turkish girls pregnant in past 7 years – health ministry



Istanbul tops the list with 6,586 cases, followed by İzmir.

Some 91,208 Turkish girls under the age of 18 have been impregnated in the last 7 years, according to figures provided by the Health Ministry, highlighting the deep problem of child marriage the country faces.

“Istanbul topped the list with 6,586 cases followed by İzmir, which had 5,714 cases,” Minister Mehmet Müezzinoğlu said in a response to a parliamentary question by the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). The southeastern province of Tunceli remained the least problematic province with a mere 32 cases, the Health Ministry figures showed.

Data collected from Child Watch Centers in 13 provinces showed 2,792 children faced sexual abuse last year, while 263 were victims of underage marriages.

The minister's response read that a notice was sent to health institutions to report to the local courts if there were any pregnancy cases involving unmarried girls under the age of 18. The notice also said health institutions should look for any signs of forcefulness and violence involving pregnant girls over the age of 15.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/09_14/09_02/090214_turkey.htm

Ebola isn't unique: women are significantly more likely to die in disasters

Two excellent stories, one by BuzzFeed's Jina Moore and another by Lauren Wolfe at Foreign Policy, recently brought to light the fact that women make up 75 percent of the current Ebola epidemic's victims in Liberia. Earlier in the week, the Washington Post reported that in other affected states women have comprised 55 to 60 percent of the dead.

"If a man is sick, the woman can easily bathe him but the man cannot do so," says Marpue Spear, the executive director of the Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), quoted by Wolfe. "Traditionally, women will take care of the men as compared to them taking care of the women."

Both Wolfe and Moore point out that gender role affect transmission and mortality rates and that not enough is being done to acknowledge this fact in the development of solutions. The principles at work here are fundamentally true in disasters around the world. As global warming increases the incidence of disasters, this will only become more apparent. Which does not in any way, shape or form suggest that it will be paid attention to by people with the power.

The truth is that while epidemics affect genders differently, what is happening right now gender-wise in countries affected by Ebola is the norm in disasters across the globe. As senior gender adviser at the International Union for Conservation of Nature Rose Mwebza puts it, "whereas disasters do not discriminate against people, humans most certainly do."

Read more:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/women-and-disaster-relief_b_5697868.html

Draft-law to stem growing child marriage trend



At 13, Samiha left school and the home she shared with 10 people near Baalbek in eastern Lebanon to live in a tent with her new husband, a 41-year-old tradesman.

"I didn't feel anything, I didn't have a choice," she said of the marriage, arranged by her father.

"The first night, when I followed him into the bedroom, I was terrified. I couldn't move."

That night, without knowing anything about sex, she fell pregnant.

"I'm unhappy, but I have to accept this life," said the pretty blonde with green eyes.

Both she and her husband hail from the town of Qusayr, just across the border in Syria, part of a massive influx of refugees into Lebanon since the war there started.

Now aged 15, Samiha is already the mother of two children.

There are no official statistics on child marriage in Lebanon, but it takes place in several rural areas in the country and has risen with the influx of Syrian refugees, experts say.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/145078-draft-law-to-stem-growing-child-marriage-trend>

Iran's supreme guide slams western views on feminism



Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei on Thursday slammed Western values which he said, unlike those in the Islamic republic, undermine feminism.

His comments come amid political tensions in Iran where conservatives want to strengthen measures preventing women and men from mixing while President Hassan Rouhani advocates more social freedoms.

"Moral crises are increasing in the West, such as... adopting a wrong position about 'women' and seriously undermining the feminism wave," Khamenei said in remarks posted on his website www.leader.ir.

In Iran, values concerning the role of women in society are inscribed in the constitution which states it is the "duty" of Iranian women to raise children within the respect of religion.

Khamenei made the remarks during a meeting with the Assembly of Experts, a body of religious leaders tasked with overseeing the activities of the supreme leader and who have the power to sack him.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/146176-iran-s-supreme-guide-slams-western-views-on-feminism>

Egypt religious body: Suspend belly-dancing show



Egypt's top religious body demanded Wednesday that a new belly-dancing TV show be suspended for "corrupting morals" and serving "extremists" who could use it as a pretext to depict Egyptian society as anti-Islamic.

The call by Dar al-Ifta, the top body that advises Muslims on religious and life issues, follows others criticizing the show called "Dancer." But the debate over it isn't all about it being too racy for television — it's part of a concerted effort by Egypt's government to show its both challenging Islamists as a political forces while still respecting the country's more-conservative values.

"Dancer" aired only once on the Cairo and People satellite television network. A famous belly dancer known as Dina was among a three-member panel that chose the most-talented dancers, many of whom were not Egyptians.

In an advertisement, the network said the winner would receive the title "the best belly dancer in the world." The contestants also shouted at each other and fought in the advertisement in the tradition of Western-style reality shows.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/146089-egypt-religious-body-suspend-belly-dancing-show>

Saudi Arabia – women banned from visiting male doctors without male guardian present



A “fatwa” (edict) issued by the Council of Senior Scholars prohibits women from visiting male doctors without having male guardians present.

The Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (Haia) has officially prevented women from visiting male doctors at medical clinics without male guardians.

This came after a member of the Council of Senior Scholars issued a “fatwa” (edict) prohibiting women from visiting male doctors without having male guardians present.

“Islamic law does not permit women to visit their doctors without male guardians,” said Qais Al-Mubarak, a member of the Council of Senior Scholars. “Women are prohibited from exposing body parts to male doctors in Islamic law, especially during childbirth. This does not include medical emergencies. Islamic jurisprudence makes exceptions,” he added.

Male guardians can only be the next of kin in Islam. They are sons, grandsons, husbands, brothers, fathers or uncles.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/09_14/09_02/090214_saudi.htm

Iraq child marriage bill would allow girls to wed, severely limit women's rights

A contentious draft law being considered in Iraq could open the door to girls as young as nine getting married and would require wives to submit to sex on their husband's whim, provoking outrage from rights activists and many Iraqis who see it as a step backward for women's rights.

The measure, aimed at creating different laws for Iraq's majority Shiite population, could further fray the country's divisions amid some of the worst bloodshed since the sectarian fighting that nearly ripped the country apart after the U.S.-led invasion. It also comes as more and more children under 18 get married in the country.

"That law represents a crime against humanity and childhood," prominent Iraqi human rights activist Hana Adwar told The Associated Press. "Married underage girls are subjected to physical and psychological suffering.

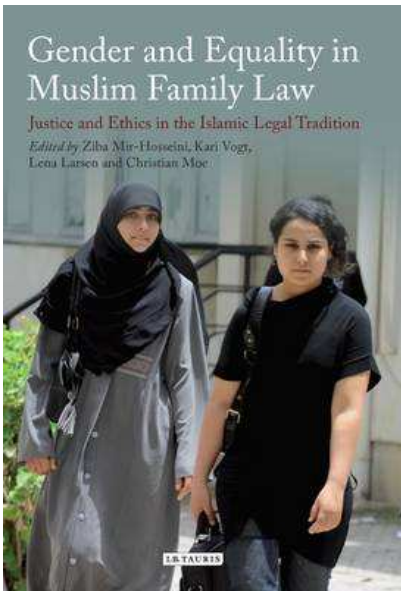
Iraqi law now sets the legal age for marriage at 18 without parental approval. Girls as young as 15 can be married only with a guardian's approval;

The proposed new measure, known as the Jaafari Personal Status Law, is based on the principles of a Shiite school of religious law founded by Jaafar al-Sadiq, the sixth Shiite imam. Iraq's Justice Ministry late last year introduced the draft measure to the Cabinet, which approved it last month despite strong opposition by rights groups and activists.

Read more:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/14/iraq-child-marriage-bill_n_4962247.html

An egalitarian understanding of Qiwamah and Wilayah



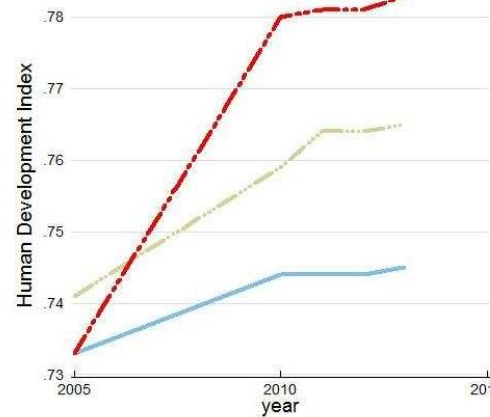
Gender and Equality in Muslim Family Law offers a groundbreaking analysis of family law, based on fieldwork in family courts, and illuminated by insights from distinguished clerics and scholars of Islam from Morocco, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia, as well as by the experience of human rights and women's rights activists.

It explores how male authority is sustained through law and court practice in different contexts, the consequences for women and the family, and the demands made by Muslim women's groups. The book argues for women's full equality before the law by re-examining the jurisprudential and theological arguments for male guardianship (qiwama, wilaya) in Islamic legal tradition.

Read more:

<http://www.musawah.org/egalitarian-understanding-qiwamah-and-wilayah#sthash.namWsw2m.dpuf>

Lebanon development a mixed bag: report



Just under 10 percent of Lebanese women believe a man is justified in beating his wife, according to a U.N.-sponsored report released Thursday, which painted a mixed picture for Lebanon's progress in key development factors.

The United Nations Development Program's annual Human Development Report, entitled "Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience," also concluded that Arab states were improving overall.

"By addressing vulnerabilities, all people may share in development progress, and human development will become increasingly equitable and sustainable," UNDP Administrator Helen Clark said in a statement.

Aside from the news that 9.7 percent of Lebanese women aged 18-49 believe that a man should be able to physically discipline his wife, the report also showed that Lebanon's citizens now enjoy an average life expectancy of 80 years, a figure that has improved by 12 years since 1980. Women tend to live to around the age of 82 and men to 78.

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jul-25/265059-lebanon-development-a-mixed-bag-report.ashx#axzz3B0CzgUoE>

Ending child marriage in a generation: what research is needed?

"Mobilization around the problem of child marriage has been very successful. A shared vision and narrative of the promising or successful program examples at all levels will help drive resources toward programs and research that will contribute to ending child marriage."

By mapping current knowledge of child marriage and the programs (including communication-centered programs) designed to address this practice, and, by highlighting gaps in the research on child marriage in which additional investment could catalyze change, this paper is intended to generate discussion in the field. It offers a coordinated research framework - in dialogue with programs - and recommendations for ending child marriage.

The opening pages of the report outline in detail why child marriage - sometimes called "early and forced marriage" because minors, by definition, are unable to give formal consent - is a problem. In sum: "Girls' rights, health and development are undermined by the impact of early marriage, pregnancy and childbearing on their mortality and morbidity, the early termination of their schooling, and the ripples of girls' poor health and limited human capital on their future productivity and the lives of their children, families and their nations."

As noted here, "over the past five to ten years, many organizations, researchers and donors have developed, implemented and, to a lesser extent, evaluated programs to delay or prevent child marriage and mitigate its harmful effects on the lives of girls and their families.

Read more:

<http://www.cominit.com/global/content/ending-child-marriage-generation-what-research-needed>

Violence at home costs \$8 trillion a year, worse than war-study

Domestic violence, mainly against women and children, kills far more people than wars and is an often overlooked scourge that costs the world economy more than \$8 trillion a year, experts said on Tuesday.

The study, which its authors said was a first attempt to estimate global costs of violence, urged the United Nations to pay more attention to abuse at home that gets less attention than armed conflicts from Syria to Ukraine.

"For every civil war battlefield death, roughly nine people ... are killed in inter-personal disputes," Anke Hoeffler of Oxford University and James Fearon of Stanford University wrote in the report.

From domestic disputes to wars, they estimated that all violence worldwide cost \$9.5 trillion a year, mainly in lost economic output and equivalent to 11.2 percent of world gross domestic product.

In recent years, about 20-25 nations suffered civil wars, devastating many local economies and costing about \$170 billion a year. Homicides, mainly of men unrelated to domestic disputes, cost \$650 billion.

But those figures were dwarfed by the \$8 trillion annual cost of domestic violence, mostly against women and children.

The study said about 290 million children suffer violent discipline at home, according to estimates based on data from the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF.

Read more:

<http://www.trust.org/item/20140909124726-66gkk>

We are still here



This 47-page report profiles 17 Syrian women who are now refugees in Turkey. Through written and photographic portraits, the report documents ways in which the conflict impacts women in particular. Women profiled in the report experienced violations by government and pro-government forces as well as by armed groups opposed to the government such as Liwa'al-Islam and extremist groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS). Some female activists and humanitarian aid providers said they had been threatened, arbitrarily arrested and detained, and tortured by government or armed opposition forces. All six former detainees profiled in the report experienced physical abuse or torture in detention; one woman was sexually assaulted multiple times. Other women said they had been victims of discriminatory restrictions on their dress and movement. Several women were injured or lost family members in indiscriminate attacks on civilians by government forces.

Read more:

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2014/07/02/we-are-still-here>

Control & Sexuality: The Revival of Zina Laws in Muslim Contexts

Control and Sexuality by Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Vanja Hamzić examines zina laws in some Muslim contexts and communities in order to explore connections between the criminalization of sexuality, gender-based violence and women's rights activism. The Violence is Not Our Culture Campaign and the Women Living Under Muslim Laws network present this comparative study and feminist analysis of zina laws as a contribution to the broader objective of ending violence in the name of 'culture'.

It is hoped that the publication will help activists, policy-makers, researchers and other civil society actors acquire a better understanding of how culture and/or religion are invoked to justify laws that criminalize women's sexuality and subject them to cruel, inhuman and degrading forms of punishment.

"It is most timely that this publication should emerge when issues of culture and human rights are being debated in many venues in the international arena: within the United Nations; in national and transnational, mainstream and alternative media outlets; and across social and political movements. "Some cultural practices may be particularly detrimental to the rights of women and girls. All harmful practices, regardless of provenance and justification, must be eliminated. All human rights are universal, indivisible and inter-related.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/08_14/08_25/082514_control.htm

For a direct link to report:

<http://weldd.org/sites/default/files/control%20and%20sexuality.pdf>

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