

NEWS & ARTICLES
GENDER ACTIVISM

One billion rising 2014 – Women around the world for justice

UN peace talks on Syria collectively failed women

Egyptian regime ‘going after youth and rights organizations’

World economic forum 2014 has 15% women – fewer than last year

Feminist economists respond to the recent IMF discussion note: Women, Work, And the Economy: Macroeconomic gains from gender equity (Part 2)

Divorce by text message

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Getting away with sexual abuse in Jordan

Morocco amends law to end child rapist evasion of punishment by marrying victim

Egypt’s security forces once again using virginity test on female detainees

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Syria – Regional armed opposition groups impose discriminatory restrictions on women and girls

Tunisia enshrines gender equality in new constitution

Government of Iraq launches its national action plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2014-2018)

The pride of working women – Algeria

On the occasion of the Arab Woman’s Day, first lady Wafa Suleiman notes that Arab women’s journey is long and arduous – Beirut

RESOURCES & CALLS
BOOKS & REPORTS

Gender discrimination at its worst: an overview of the discriminatory laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran in family law

Call for papers: women in war and at war conference 2014

Substantive equality and reproductive rights: a briefing paper on aligning development goals with human rights obligations

Abuses of women in Iraq’s criminal justice system

Book review: Sexuality in Muslim contexts: restrictions and resistance

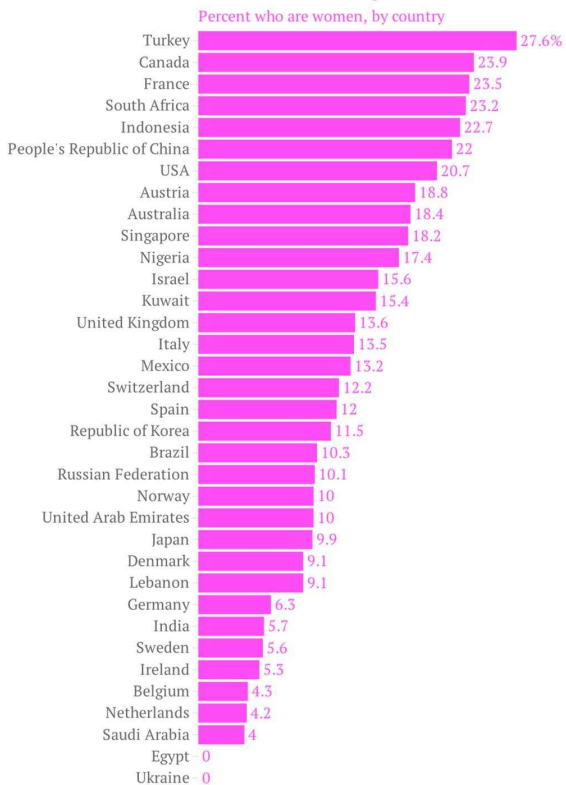
The MENA Gender and Development eBrief receives material from various sources for its publication. Should you wish to refer to these sources/ sites directly, the list includes publications from: AWID: www.awid.org, Democracy Digest: www.freedomhouse.org, e-Civicus: www.civicus.org, Eldis: www.eldis.org,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

NEWS & ARTICLES

GENDER ACTIVISM

World economic forum 2014 has 15% women – fewer than last year

Gender at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos



"Of the 2633 people scheduled to attend the World Economic Forum 2014 in Davos, only 395 are women."

Finding a woman at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos is not getting any easier. Last year, 17% of participants at the invitation-only event were women. This year, only 15% are.

Organizers say it's simply the reality of today's world. Many participants are invited to Davos based solely on their job function—like the president of Harvard University, who is currently a woman. When the people in those roles change, so can the demographics of Davos.

"We're on the front line of reflecting the world as it is, not how we want it to be," says Adrian Monck, a managing director and head of communications for WEF.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/01_14/01_20/0120_14_world.htm

One billion rising 2014 – Women around the world for justice

On 14 February 2013, one billion people in 207 countries rose and danced to demand an end to violence against women and girls.

On 14 February 2014, we are escalating our efforts, calling on women and men everywhere to RISE, RELEASE, DANCE, and demand JUSTICE!*

ONE BILLION RISING FOR JUSTICE is a global call to women survivors of violence and those who love them to gather safely in community outside places where they are entitled to justice – courthouses, police stations, government offices, school administration buildings, work places, sites of environmental injustice, military courts, embassies, places of worship, homes, or simply public gathering places where women deserve to feel safe but too often do not. It is a call to survivors to break the silence and release their stories – politically, spiritually, outrageously – through art, dance, marches, ritual, song, spoken word, testimonies and whatever way feels right.

Our stories have been buried, denied, erased, altered, and minimized by patriarchal systems that allow impunity to reign. Justice begins when we speak, release, and acknowledge the truth in solidarity and community.

ONE BILLION RISING FOR JUSTICE is an invitation to break free from confinement, obligation, shame, guilt, grief, pain, humiliation, rage, and bondage.

Read more:

<http://www.onebillionrising.org/about/campaign/>

UN peace talks on Syria collectively failed women



Participants in a Women Lead to Peace campaign held a demonstration in Montreux, Switzerland, during part of the UN peace talks that occurred in January 2014. CODEPINK

This is a difficult time for peace advocates. How can we talk about women participating at the peace table when talk has not translated into action? How can we discuss the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, first mandated by the United Nations Security Council in 2000, when despite rhetoric, goodwill, ministerial support, UN mediation, advocacy and campaigns, Syrian women peacemakers were not even present at the opening session of the so-called Geneva II talks on Jan. 22 in Montreux, Switzerland? They were also not present at the infamous negotiating “table” two days later in Geneva between the Syrian regime and the opposition.

Syrian women civil society leaders were never given a chance to speak on that opening day — a missed opportunity, since they have actually mapped out key steps to peace. In the last few weeks, as we at PeaceWomen strove to have women participate at the high-level negotiations in Switzerland, diplomats told me, with a tone of arrogance, “This is not a round table; it has two sides only.” I also heard ambassadors agree and agree, and agree again, with one another that women must be part of the Geneva II process to end the three-year-old civil war in Syria, but all their commitments fell flat. I heard colleagues try to convince themselves that negotiation “observers” were actually “at the table.”

Read more:

<http://passblue.com/2014/02/10/un-peace-talks-on-syria-collectively-failed-women/>

Egyptian regime ‘going after youth and rights organizations’

In a clinic providing psychological support for victims of torture, tucked away in a side street downtown, medical doctor and human rights defender Magda Adly spoke to ANSAmEd about an Egypt back under military rule and the situation of women therein. A co-founder in 1993 and current director of the Al Nadeem Center for the Psychological Management and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, Adly was herself subjected to brutal treatment at the hands of a member of the security apparatus in 2008, when she was attacked by police officer and suffered a fractured shoulder, head injuries and loss of consciousness for thirty minutes on leaving a courtroom after attending a trial on a torture case. She has also been subjected to arbitrary detention and harassment over the years.



Adly said that as far as the situation of women is concerned, she has seen “no change. We still do not have a law that criminalizes violence against women in the family. And sexual violence is increasing.” For example, some “186 cases of sexual assault and rape were documented in Tahrir Square” during the protests between June 28 and July 7, 2013, she noted.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/egyptian-regime-going-after-youth-and-rights-organizations>

Feminist economists respond to the recent IMF discussion note Women, Work, And the Economy: Macroeconomic gains from gender equity (Part 2)



In this second of the two part series on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Discussion Note entitled Women, Work, and the Economy: Macroeconomic Gains From Gender Equity, feminist economists Prof. Stephanie Seguino with Associate Prof. Elissa Braunstein and Dr. Anit N. Mukherjee take a look at the some of the shortfalls in the report related to gender wage gap, how macroeconomic policies perpetuate gender inequality, female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) and unpaid care work.

Prof. Stephanie Seguino with Associate Prof. Elissa Braunstein assert that the Discussion Note advances the claim that “providing women with equal economic opportunities and unleashing the full potential of the female labour force has significant prospective growth and welfare implications.” The implicit argument underlying the brief is that economies that limit women’s labour force participation sacrifice efficiency.

The report acknowledges that women’s wages are lower than men’s and discriminatorily so. The inference is that this is due to idiosyncratic employer behaviour that reflects outmoded stereotypes. Legal remedies, it is argued, can solve this problem. This account fails to note that the gender wage gap is fuelled by job segregation, which concentrates women in low-wage occupations and jobs.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/Feminist-economists-respond-to-the-recent-IMF-Discussion-Note-Women-Work-and-the-Economy-Macroeconomic-gains-from-Gender-Equity-Part-2>

Divorce by text message

Last week defenders of Islamic law received a publicity blow when a Malaysian court evoked Sharia law to allow a man to divorce his wife by text message. Yes, text message. As in: "Am dvrcong u".

The decision was, quite rightly, condemned by women's rights groups in Malaysia, who say to condone such frivolity with Islamic law highlights the way it is inherently bias towards men and leaves women with the short end of the stick.

Under Sharia law, a man can divorce a woman simply by announcing his intentions. This is followed by a three month "cooling off" period before the divorce can be finalized, to create an opportunity for resolution.

However, if a woman wants a divorce, she must go before a court to seek a divorce, and she must prove her husband has an inadequacy - usually impotency or extended absence. If not, she has no right to divorce him.

Sharia law has its roots in the 7th century Koran, and in personal examples set by Prophet Mohammed. Islamists who see themselves defending the faith have ignored calls to change this legal system to reflect the improvement in women's status in the modern world, saying that God's word stands the test of time.

The irony of this text message ruling is that it subverts both liberals' desire for more modern interpretations of the Koran (you don't get much more modern in the Islamic world than divorce by text message) and Islamists' own goal to uphold the seriousness of marriage. The issue of text-messaged divorces has been a long-standing topic of debate among feminists and a new, tech-savvy generation of Islamists both here and elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Read more:

<http://www.sistersinislam.org.my/news.php?item.157.27>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Getting away with sexual abuse in Jordan



Rape victims in Jordan say they get punished instead of the attacker

AMMAN, 27 January 2014 (IRIN) - Shop cleaner Nawal* from East Amman regrets the day she accepted an offer of extra work from her employer, who said he wanted her to clean his home. It was a trap; he took her home and raped her.

Although an investigation proved her allegations, she says the legal process did not bring justice. Her rapist benefited from controversial article 308 in Jordan's penal code, which allows rapists to escape jail if they marry their victims and stay with them for five years.

"Marrying a rape victim to her rapist is committing a second crime against her. It is the rapist who should be punished," said Munir Idiabas, the executive director of Sisterhood Is a Global Institute (SIGI), a locally based women's rights group.

But some legal experts argue the article leaves women the choice not to marry their assailants.

Read more:

<http://www.irinnews.org/report/99544/getting-away-with-sexual-abuse-in-jordan>

Morocco amends law to end child rapist evasion of punishment by marrying victim

Morocco scrapped a highly controversial law allowing a child rapist to evade punishment if he marries his victim, as rights activists pressed the government to legislate to protect women from violence.

The amendment to Article 475 of the penal code, first proposed by the country's Islamist-led government a year ago, was adopted unanimously by lawmakers, parliamentary sources said.

The offending article made international headlines in March 2012 when Amina Filali (16) killed herself after being forced to marry the man who had raped her, and who remained free.

Right activists hailed the amendment, while stressing that much more remained to be done to promote gender equality and protect women from violence in the North African country.

"It's a very important step. But it's not enough... We are campaigning for a complete overhaul of the penal code for women," Fatima Maghnaoui, who heads a group supporting women victims of violence, told AFP.

Global advocacy group Avaaz said it had handed a petition signed by more than a million people to Morocco's parliament demanding that the government adopt promised legislation to combat violence against women.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/01_14/01_27/012714_morocco.htm

Egypt's security forces once again using virginity test on female detainees

"I thought the tests were history," said one of four women who spoke to BuzzFeed about the revival of the practice.



CAIRO — Jihad Safwat pulls her headscarf tight and presses her hands deep into her belly when she talks about the virginity tests she underwent last month in Egyptian detention.

The 21-year-old medical student was arrested at a Dec. 28 rally organized by Muslim Brotherhood supporters at Cairo University. For nearly two weeks she was held in detention, mostly at Cairo's Azkabia police station, where she says she was forced to submit to virginity and pregnancy tests that police conducted at a medical facility nearby. When she was finally released, police filed no formal charges against her — and handed her the bill for her "treatments." Safwat was one of four women who spoke with BuzzFeed about undergoing forced virginity and pregnancy tests at the hands of the Egyptian security services.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/egypt%E2%80%99s-security-forces-once-again-using-virginity-tests-female-detainees>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Syria – Regional armed opposition groups impose discriminatory restrictions on women and girls



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.

January 13, 2014 (New York) – 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>

Tunisia enshrines gender equality in new constitution

Tunisia's constitutional assembly voted to enshrine equality between men and women in its draft constitution, safeguarding the country's status as having the Arab world's most progressive laws on women's right.

The text enshrining gender equality was approved by 159 lawmakers out of the 169 who voted. Women's rights activists in Tunisia hailed the provisional approval of article 20, which states that "all male and female citizens have the same rights and duties. They are equal before the law without discrimination".

"We wanted to add details that would ban discrimination based on sex or skin colour," Ahlem Belhaj, former president of the Tunisian Association of Women Democrats, told AFP.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/02_14/02_03/020314_tunisia.htm

The pride of working women – Algeria

A new ILO study examines the constraints on working women in Algeria and the opportunities available to them.

ALGIERS (ILO News) – "I am proud of my work, but the men say that we have taken their jobs. Our society is unyielding."

This statement by a 42 year old Algerian woman from Tissemsilt shows that the employment of women is still a matter for debate in Algeria – as in numerous other countries.

Despite the considerable advances seen in the Algerian political sphere, where women constitute over 31 per cent of the deputies to the National Assembly (*), their economic participation remains very low.

In 2011, with a proportion of 17.7 per cent of women in the workforce, Algeria – alongside Iraq and Syria - was among the countries with the lowest level of female economic participation in the world – according to an ILO study pending publication (**). Women are, nevertheless, gradually beginning to enter the workforce. According to the National Statistical Office of Algeria, by 2013 the female labour force participation rate had risen to 19 per cent.

Read more:

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_234011/lang-en/index.htm

Government of Iraq launches its national action plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2014-2018)

Baghdad, 6 February 2014 – The Government of Iraq today launched its National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2014-2018), thus becoming the first country in the Middle East and North Africa Region to launch such a program.

Applauding the tireless efforts of the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government as well as representatives of the civil society for this great achievement, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, noted that "Iraq has achieved an important milestone, particularly for the millions of Iraqi women from different walks of life who strive to have their voices heard and who actively seek to contribute to the development, peace and stability of Iraq. Today, Iraq joins 43 United Nations Member States who have endorsed a National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325".

Read more:

<http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/government-iraq-launches-its-national-action-plan-un-security-council-resolution-1325>

On the occasion of the Arab Woman's Day, first lady Wafa Suleiman notes that arab women's journey is long and arduous

During the commemoration of the Arab Woman's Day on February 1st, the Lebanese First Lady expressed her concern with the realities of Arab women especially that gender equality has yet to be realized in most Arab country at a time when women are still excluded from decision making circles.

Suleiman noted that the journey towards women's advancement is long and arduous and does not only concern Arab women but also involves intellectuals, political leaders, opinion leaders, academics and heads of political parties in the Arab world. She also added that the date of February 1st is an opportunity to look back at achievements and remaining priorities, while highlighting the recent developments in Tunisia with the endorsement of gender equality in the Constitution. However, Suleiman lamented that family laws in the Arab world are still discriminatory and we have yet to struggle for laws that protect women from family violence as well as for a needed reform of the penal code. She also added that most Arab government have yet to ratify the international convention on trafficking in humans and is still far from institutionalizing gender equality as well as women's political participation. Suleiman concluded that everybody should be committed to celebrate this date next year with concrete achievements whilst hoping for a better future for Arab women and communities.

Read more:

<http://www.weeportal-lb.org/content/occasion-arab-woman%E2%80%99s-day-first-lady-wafa-suleiman-notes-arab-women%E2%80%98s-journey-long-and>

RESOURCES & CALLS

BOOKS & REPORTS

Gender discrimination at its worst: an overview of the discriminatory laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran in family law

Submission to the United Nations Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/01_14/01_20/012014_justice.htm

For a direct link to report:

<http://justiceforiran.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/IFI-Submission-WGD-20-01-2014-.pdf>

Call for papers: women in war and at war conference 2014

Women in war and at war: recent developments 18th – 19th September 2014 / University of Warwick
Confirmed guest speakers: Prof. Chrisitine Chinkin, Prof. Mark Drumbl

Call for papers

Women's roles in war are complex and varied and are not limited to that of victims. During the Arab Spring, women took to the streets protesting against oppressive regimes in North Africa and the Middle East. We are also witnessing a significant rise in female political activism during conflict: many women increasingly find internet, blogs and social media a useful tool to fight oppression, advocate change but also to report from war zones.

Read more:

<http://ilg2.org/2014/01/11/call-for-papers-women-in-war-and-at-war-conference-2014/>

For a direct link to call for proposal:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/lawcriminology/pdf/Conference---Women-in-War-and-at-War---Call-for-papers.pdf>

Substantive equality and reproductive rights: a briefing paper on aligning development goals with human rights obligations



SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

A BRIEFING PAPER ON
ALIGNING DEVELOPMENT GOALS
WITH HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS



www.crr.org/reproductive-rights.org

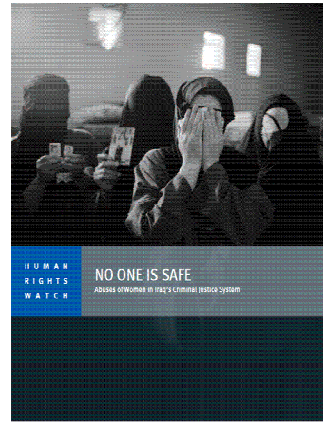
International human rights norms have recognized that reproductive rights are women's rights, clarifying that violations of reproductive rights are primarily manifestations of discrimination, poverty, and violence. Where women's rights to equality and non-discrimination are not fulfilled, women's access to reproductive health services and decision-making about their reproductive lives is limited.

Read more:

<http://reproductiverights.org/en/document/substantive-equality-and-reproductive-rights-a-briefing-paper-on-aligning-development-goals>

Abuses of women in Iraq's criminal justice system

February 7, 2014 - Both men and women suffer from the severe flaws of the criminal justice system. But women suffer a double burden due to their second class status in Iraqi society. According to witness accounts and to information numerous civil society activists and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) provided to Human Rights Watch, women are frequently targeted not only for crimes they themselves are said to have committed, but to harass male family or tribal members.



Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/02_14/02_03/020314_iraq2.htm

Book review: Sexuality in Muslim contexts: restrictions and resistance



Using case studies from Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, China, Bangladesh, Israel and India, *Sexuality in Muslim Contexts* argues that Muslim religious traditions do not necessarily lead to conservative agendas but can promote emancipatory standpoints. This book is one that should be read by all those interested in sexuality, religion, Islam, or gender, writes Olivia Mason.

Read more:

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2013/05/11/book-review-sexuality-in-muslim-contexts-restrictions-and-resistance/>

The MENA Gender and Development eBrief 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, Democracy Digest: www.freedomhouse.org, e-Civicus: www.civicus.org, Eldis: www.eldis.org, ESCWA: www.escwa.org.lb, GDB: www.developmentex.com, ILO: www.ilo.org, One World: www.oneworld.net, Siyanda: www.siyanda.org, The Daily Star: www.dailystar.com.lb, The Drum Beat: www.comminit.com, The World Bank: www.worldbank.org, UNDP: www.undp.org, WLP: www.learningpartnership.org, WIDE: www.wide-network.org, IRIN News: www.irinnews.org, Women's UN Report Network: www.wunrn.com, Women Living Under Muslim Laws: www.wluml.org

The MENA Gender and Development E-Brief is published by **CRTD.A**.

To get all previous MENA GAD e-brief issues please log on to: <http://crt-da.org.lb/newsletter/82>

For more information about **CRTD.A** please visit: <http://crt-da.org.lb>

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a member of **CRTD.A**/ IRIS.

Please direct any comments to info@crt-da.org.lb

If you choose to unsubscribe please send a blank e-mail from the e-mail in which you receive the e-Brief from, with the heading unsubscribe to unsubscribe@crt-da.org.lb

If you wish to subscribe please send a blank e-mail, with subscribe as a heading to subscribe@crt-da.org.lb

All the available links were accessible during the preparation process

Please accept our apologies if your subscribe / unsubscribe needs are not being met to your satisfaction, as errors will inevitably occur

Opinions and views expressed in this GAD E-Brief relate to their respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of **CRTD.A**

Information presented in this GAD E-Brief is considered public information and may be distributed or copied. Use of appropriate credit is requested. While **CRTD.A** makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information, various data such as contacts, weblinks, dates, etc. may change.

CRTD.A provides no warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of the data and information harvested from other public sources.

Some of the information in this GAD E-Brief may contain references to information created and maintained by other organizations. Please note that **CRTD.A** does not control and cannot guarantee the timeliness, or accuracy of these outside materials.
