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Only woman in Algeria presidential race 'won't hold back'



Algerian presidential candidate Louisa Hanoune

A string of white pearls around her neck, her hair tied in a bun, Louisa Hanoune, the only woman running for Algeria's presidency, holds out her palms and declares: "I have clean hands".

The remark triggers an outburst of celebratory ululations and chants of "Louisa! Louisa!" among supporters of the 60-year-old leftist candidate, who is widely popular in Algeria, even among conservatives hostile to feminism.

"I have clean hands," she declares in a husky voice. "I have not held back, I have not sold off any businesses, I have not oppressed women."

She was speaking at a gathering in Kolea, about 40 kilometres (25 miles) west of Algiers, where many women were among the roughly 300 supporters of the head of the Worker's Party, who has been a member of parliament since 1997.

Read more:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/98658/World/Region/Only-woman-in-Algeria-presidential-race-wont-hold.aspx>

Iraq – Women protest against proposed law to permit child marriage at age 9 & father custody



About two dozen Iraqi women have demonstrated in Baghdad against a draft law approved by the Iraqi cabinet that would permit the marriage of nine-year-old girls and automatically give child custody to fathers.

The group's protest was on International Women's Day on Saturday (local time) and a week after the cabinet voted for the legislation, based on Shiite Islamic jurisprudence, allowing clergy to preside over marriages, divorces and inheritances.

The draft law would also condone a husband's right to insist on sexual intercourse with his wife whenever he wishes.

The draft now goes to parliament.

"On this day of women, women of Iraq are in mourning," the protesters shouted.

"We believe that this is a crime against humanity," said Hanaa Eduar, a prominent Iraqi human rights activist.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/03_14/03_10/0310_14_iraq.htm

Turkey – Women marching for international women’s day



We are, as the women who live in Turkey, raising our voices on the streets for eleven years, calling out against patriarchy, against men’s violence, sexism, heterosexism, capitalism, militarism, and war, at the night marches of 8th of March.

Since the last 8th of March, it has been a year of increasing violence against women.

Every day, we are reading about another femicide in the news. Every day three women are killed in Turkey. The murderers and the rapists receive no punishment. The state is not trying to stop the violence against women, but is trying to stop divorces.

The AKP (Justice and Development Party), which is the government, the legislative, and the juridical power at the same time, has taken our right of abortion. We are sent away from the doors of the public hospitals. It limited our ability to reach the contraceptive methods. The government doesn't hesitate to step forward in order to control women's bodies.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/03_14/03_10/031014_turkey.htm

Tunisia – Women take major steps to implement CEDAW

Since the Arab Spring, Islamists have attempted to walk back women’s legal rights in Tunisia. Yet, women’s organizations and civil society groups have successfully pushed back against these forces, and even achieved groundbreaking, gender equality laws for women in several important areas.

Tunisian women were able to secure an electoral law that requires gender parity in candidate lists submitted by all political parties, a first in the Arab world.

Tunisia has a history of progressive policies and feminist activism. President Habib Bourguiba (1956-2087) viewed the emancipation of women as a requirement for the development of his country. In 1956, he promulgated the Code of Personal Status (CPS), which remains unique in the Arab World. In spite of religious leaders’ opposition, President Bourguiba abolished polygamy, early and forced marriages, repudiation, and declared equality for women and men to have education and work. President Bourguiba and his successor, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali (1987-2011), ushered in state-supported feminism in Tunisia. Beginning in the 1970’s, two women’s organizations were formed to address remaining forms of gender discrimination in the country: the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD) and the Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development (AFTURD). Today, ATFD and AFTURD continue to work ceaselessly to strengthen women’s rights and eradicate all forms of gender discrimination.

Read more:

<http://www.icanpeacework.org/tunisian-women-take-major-steps-to-implement-the-cedaw/>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Activists decry 'weakened' domestic violence law



Protesters carry banners in Arabic that read "Vote for us so we vote for you" as they call for the adoption of the law protecting women from domestic violence near the Parliament in Beirut, Tuesday, April 1, 2014.

Rights activists claim that several amendments to the long-awaited law addressing domestic violence in Lebanon undermine the victory of Tuesday's passage of the law by Parliament.

"We had important comments that affected the essence of the law, and it weakens protection measures for women," Zoya Rouhana, director of gender-equality organization KAFA, told The Daily Star.

"We were expecting that the amendments would at least be discussed during Parliament, but unfortunately it did not address it in depth even though many MPs had signed in support, and nobody had the concern to rise and defend them during the session."

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Apr-02/251992-activists-decry-weakened-domestic-violence-law.ashx#axzz2xhYhK1DJ>

Iraq – Working to end domestic violence against refugees of the Syria conflict



More than 2.5 million refugees have now fled the three-year conflict in Syria to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. The Kurdistan region of northern Iraq is home to some 225,000 displaced Syrians who have settled here in camps and amongst host communities, desperate to escape the ongoing bloodshed in their native country.

But life is not easy in the camps either. Many young women, thankful to have escaped with their lives, arrive here only to find themselves forced into marriage by their families. Domestic abuse is widespread. One victim, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals, tells a story that is tragically not uncommon. At the age of 20, she was forced to marry a relative, and was later abused.

"He decided to marry me off to a relative by force," she says. "I stayed with him for a month. During that month, my life was equal to death. I was beaten up. I was slapped. I was lucky not to be killed."

Read more:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/articles/2014/03/24/iraq-working-to-end-domestic-violence-against-women-refugees-of-the-syria-conflict/>

Egypt – launch of first prosecution for female genital mutilation after girl dies



Sohair al-Bata'a, a 13-year-old Egyptian girl who died after being subjected to female genital mutilation. Human rights groups forced the government to reopen the case

A doctor will stand trial for the first time in Egypt on charges of female genital mutilation, after a 13-year-old girl died following an alleged operation in his clinic last year.

In a landmark case, Dr Raslan Fadl is the first doctor to be prosecuted for FGM in Egypt, where the practice was banned in 2008, but is still widely accepted and carried out by many doctors in private.

Sohair al-Bata'a died in Fadl's care in June 2013, and her family admitted that she had been victim to an FGM operation carried out at their request.

The case was initially dropped after an official medical report claimed that Sohair had been treated for genital warts, and that she died from an allergic reaction to penicillin. But after a campaign by local rights groups and the international organization Equality Now, as well as an investigation by Egypt's state-run National Population Council (NPC), the country's chief prosecutor agreed to reopen the case – leading to this week's seminal prosecution of both Fadl and Sohair's father.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2014/03_14/03_17/031714_egypt.htm

Broken promises



Nearly four years after it was first submitted to Parliament, the domestic violence law was finally passed Tuesday, but the amendments made to it since 2010 do a great disservice to the women of this country.

But this is not a women's issue alone, and must not be seen as such if there is to be any hope of the law becoming firmer. For domestic violence is society's problem, not just a problem for women, though they suffer the most from it, as the string of recent murders of Lebanese women at the hands of their husbands is testament to.

Though it has prided itself for decades on being among the most liberal countries in the region, Lebanon is in fact hanging on to some quasi-medieval trends. This new law, a dangerous compromise that sought to placate both women's rights activists and the religious authorities, basically legalizes marital rape. But while the battle has been lost, the war is not over, and pressure on politicians must continue to be applied by the rest of the population.

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2014/Apr-02/252001-broken-promises.ashx#ixzz2yPTAf51J>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Arab world failing women in gender equality, education



An Iraqi girl herds water buffaloes in the Euphrates river in Najaf, south of Baghdad, March 6, 2014. Picture taken March 6, 2014. (REUTERS/Alaa Al-Marjani)

The Arab world is among the most unequal regions in the world when it comes to gender and education, according to a new report released Monday by UNESCO.

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report studied gender imbalances in education across the globe, finding that 100 million women in low- and middle-income countries were unable to read a single sentence. The report concludes that not a single goal set by the U.N.'s Education for All initiative will be reached by the 2015 deadline.

According to the report, it is projected that by 2015, only 70 percent of countries will have achieved parity between the sexes in primary education and 56 percent will have achieved parity in lower secondary education. The report calls for immediate efforts to address this gap and ensure equal access to education for both boys and girls.

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Mar-10/249764-arab-world-failing-women-in-gender-equality-education.ashx#ixzz2vYv9mFuQ>

Saudi authorities asked to allow school sport for girls: Agency



Girls in Saudi Arabia warm up before a basketball game in Amman

Saudi authorities have been asked to consider lifting a state school ban on sports for girls, according to the official SPA news agency, in a religiously conservative country that included women in its Olympic team for the first time only two years ago.

Under a strict interpretation of sharia, Saudi women are banned from driving and must gain formal permission from a male relative to leave the country, start a job or open a bank account. But King Abdullah is pushing cautious social reforms improving women's rights in the face of conservative resistance.

SPA said Saudi Arabia's appointed Shura Council, which advises the government on policy, had asked the education ministry to look into including sports for girls in state-run schools with the proviso they should conform to Sharia rules on dress and gender segregation.

Read more:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/98667/World/Region/Saudi-authorities-asked-to-allow-school-sport-for.aspx>

Egypt is falling short of UN women's rights standards: Al-Tallawi



National Council for Women (NCW) Chairman Mervat Al-Tallawi

Egypt has achieved little regarding the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of promoting gender equality, said National Council for Women (NCW) Chairman Mervat Al-Tallawi. The NCW held a press conference on Tuesday to announce the outcome of their representation of Egypt at the 58th UN Commission on the Status of Women. She said that this year's session, held from 10 to 21 March, focused on the MDGs, a set of eight international development goals established in 2000 following the UN Millennium Summit. The third goal aims to promote equality and empower women by eliminating gender disparities in education, employment and government.

"We still have a long way to go when it comes to achieving the third MDG despite [achievements made] in the 2014 constitution," Al-Tallawi said.

Read more:

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/03/25/egypt-falling-short-un-womens-rights-standards-al-tallawi/#dnePhoto/0/>

Budgets respond to the needs of women in Morocco



A beneficiary of the Lalla Fatima Zahra Alaazizia Complex that supports women survivors of violence, connects them with hospitals, courts and other services and provides them with vocational training for the workplace.

The needs of women and girls are increasingly being reflected in how governments spend in Morocco and a new organic law of finance passed in January 2014 by the Council of Government has cemented gender throughout the budgeting process.

"Before I was housewife and was in charge of domestic work. One day I decided to change my life and I joined classes. For two years, I learned to read and to write. I also learned Arabic, calligraphy and plastic arts. Today, I create my own paintings and with the other women in my course, we decided to create a cooperative to better market our products," says Fadma.

Fadma is a beneficiary of a programme being implemented by the Department of Literacy in Morocco – one of five pilot departments that have adopted a results-based approach, and is integrating gender-responsive planning and budgeting by using performance indicators that take gender and women's need and concern into account.

Read more:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/3/budgets-respond-to-the-needs-of-women-in-morocco>

Gender Inequality in Morocco Continues, Despite Amendments to Family Law



Women rallied in support of Amina Filali, who committed suicide after being forced to marry a man who allegedly raped her

When Zineb lost her father at the age of 15, her grief was compounded when she learned that she had to share his inheritance with an older half-brother unknown to her or her mother and sister.

“It felt unfair to split it with him,” said Zineb, 29, a teacher in Rabat who asked that her full name not be used because as a political activist she is concerned about her safety. “Somebody was parachuted into your life and we didn’t know him and after all, my mom worked for half of all of that money.”

A decade ago, Morocco adopted a family code hailed by women’s rights groups as a big step forward. Three years ago, the country passed a new constitution guaranteeing gender equality. Even so, Moroccan women say that equality is still a long way off, and much of the old order remains untouched, including the inheritance law section of the family code. That law, laid down in the Quran, states that male relatives receive double the inheritance of women.

Read more:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/17/world/africa/gender-inequality-in-morocco-continues-despite-amendments-to-family-law.html? r=1>

Women’s contribution to economy remains low — report



HRH Princess Basma delivers a speech at a ceremony held in Amman on Sunday to launch a report on women’s contribution to the Kingdom’s economy

Figures related to women’s participation in economic activities remain “small” in Jordan with no noticeable advances recorded during the last two years, according to a report issued on Sunday.

Women’s engagement in the local workforce stood at around 14.1 per cent in 2012, down from 14.7 per cent in 2011, compared to an average of 30 per cent in Arab and third world countries, and 50 per cent globally, noted the report, prepared by the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW).

Jordan ranked last among 139 countries in the 2010 Global Competitiveness Report in terms of women’s economic participation, according to the report, published on the occasion of International Women’s Day.

“This shows the ineffectiveness of efforts exerted to improve women’s presence in economic life,” the report said.

Moreover, unemployment among women reached 19.9 per cent at the end of 2012, compared with 10.4 per cent among men, while the global average of unemployed women stood at 6.4 per cent.

Read more:

<http://jordantimes.com/womens-contribution-to-economy-remains-low---report>

RESOURCES & CALLS

BOOKS & REPORTS

Gender, violence and peace: a post-2015 development agenda

In this paper, Conciliation Resources and Saferworld set out a vision for including gender, violence and peace in the post-2015 framework.

A gender, violence and peace approach to post-2015 includes but also goes beyond a focus on women's empowerment. Inter alia, it means paying attention to the links between gender and violence and prioritizing inclusive decision-making.

Building on our previous recommendations for including peace building commitments in the post-2015 development agenda, we suggest targets and indicators that illustrate how gender, violence and peace issues can best be integrated into the framework.

Things the post-2015 development framework should do:

- Be universal, aimed at advancing sustainable peace for all. People, not states, should be at its core.
- Integrate peace building and violence prevention by including goals and targets, which address the most common drivers of conflict and violence.

Read more:

<http://www.c-r.org/resources/gender-violence-and-peace-post-2015-development-agenda>

For a direct link to report:

<http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/592%20CR-Saferworld%2012page%20Draft%2006%20pdf%20version.pdf>

Violence against women in the context of political transformations and economic crisis in the euro-mediterranean region

For a direct link to report:

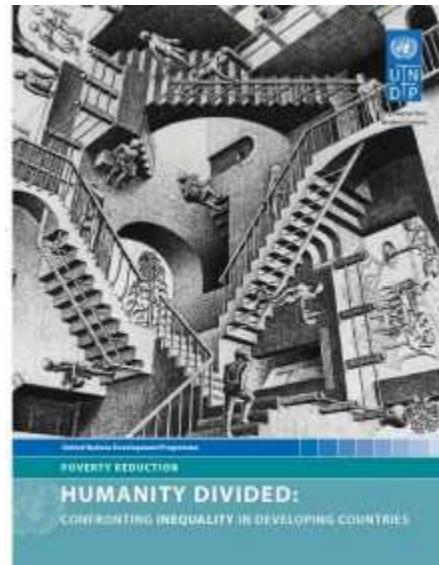
http://www.euromedrights.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/VAW-report_final_en.pdf

Women in parliament in 2013

For a direct link to report:

<http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/WIP2013-e.pdf>

Humanity divided: Confronting inequality in developing countries



This report revisits the theoretical concepts of inequalities including their measurements, analyzes their global trends, presents the policy makers' perception of inequalities in 15 countries and identifies various policy options in combating this major development challenge of our time.

The report makes the basic point that in spite of the impressive progress humanity has made on many fronts over the decades, it still remains

deeply divided. In that context, it is intended to help development actors, citizens, and policy makers contribute to global dialogues and initiate conversations in their own countries about the drivers and extent of inequalities, their impact, and the ways in which they can be curbed.

Read more:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/humanity-divided--confronting-inequality-in-developing-countries.html>

For a direct link to report:

http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Poverty%20Reduction/Inclusive%20development/Humanity%20Divided/HumanityDivided_Full-Report.pdf

Study says women face long battle for equality in Lebanon



Lebanon has a long and tough path ahead to ensure gender equality, or even basic legal protection for women, according to a comprehensive study on the situation in the country released Wednesday.

The report, conducted by international non-governmental organization World Vision and local women's rights NGO Abaad, comes just one day after Lebanon's Parliament passed an amended law to protect women from domestic violence that was heavily criticized by rights groups and activists.

"It is apparent that the traditional forms of domination, control and coercion are ever present between [married couples]," the study said. "They are still present despite all the legal procedures and efforts aiming at establishing equality between both genders. ... There are still high percentages of men who refuse to accept equality. They support it in claims, but resist in practice and real life."

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Apr-03/252134-study-says-women-face-long-battle-for-equality-in-lebanon.ashx#axzz2xmPdIB>

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