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## Fight for women's rights at forefront in Sudan



When a Sudanese teenager was sentenced to death last week for killing her husband, who had allegedly raped her, activists knew that a new fight had begun for women's rights in Sudan.

Noura Hussein, 19, received the sentence for the "intentional murder" of the man her father had forced her to marry. "Noura is facing death."

"Her case has brought us close to an execution," said Sudanese women's rights activist Wini Omer, who witnessed the sentencing on May 10.

"The situation is dangerous and necessitates taking women's rights more seriously so that we can protect them," she said.

Hussein's case has triggered outrage, with activists launching a campaign called "Justice For Noura" and the United Nations' women's agency appealing for clemency.

The teenager's plight has also focused attention on issues facing women in Sudan such as marital rape, child marriage, forced marriage and the arbitrary application of Islamic law, along with tribal traditions that often target women.

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2018/May-19/450006-fight-for-womens-rights-at-forefront-in-sudan.ashx>

## Iranian women don fake beards to defy football stadium ban



Five Iranian women have sparked an online storm after disguising themselves as men so that they could sneak into a football match, in defiance of Islamic law.

The group wore fake beards, wigs and men's clothing in order to bypass security at Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Friday. The ploy meant the women were able to see their team, Persepolis, crowned champions of the Persian Gulf Pro League for the second consecutive season.

Women have been banned from attending all-male sporting events in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, with authorities arguing that women must be "protected from the vulgar atmosphere", reports the Daily Mail.

However, the law has recently come under scrutiny following the decision of the ultra-conservative government in neighbouring Saudi Arabia to lift its own ban on mixed crowds.

That scrutiny has grown after photos were posted online of the female Persepolis fans draped in their team's red flag and holding up six fingers to the camera. The gesture "is popular among Persepolis fans and urges the club to match one of its most celebrated results, a 6-0 thrashing of local rivals Esteghlal in 2010", says The Times.

Read more:

<http://www.theweek.co.uk/iran/93294/iranian-women-don-fake-beards-to-defy-football-stadium-ban>

## Tunisian women hit campaign trail in newly found equality



Tunisian women “have the chance to act,” says Ines Boussetta, as she hits the campaign trail in northern Tebourba, listening attentively to the problems of the rural region’s inhabitants. Boussetta is one of hundreds of Tunisian women heading party lists in May 6 municipal polls – and for the first time, women will be on an equal footing with men, thanks to a new electoral law.

“I have faced many criticisms and commentaries, like ‘you are too young,’ ‘you don’t have political experience,’ ‘how can a woman lead a council?’” Boussetta, a candidate for the ruling Nida Tounes party, tells AFP.

But “women today have the chance to act, to have an opinion that counts,” she adds.

Around 100 party lists have been rejected for failing to meet a strict requirement for the candidacy of men and women to alternate in the municipal polls, the first since mass protests forced dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali from power in 2011.

Boussetta says she was attracted by Nida Tounes because its founder, Tunisia’s 91-year-old President Beji Caid Essebsi, has sought to promote the role of women and young people.

Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2018/Apr-28/447183-tunisian-women-hit-campaign-trail-in-newly-found-equality.ashx>

## Tunisian women win at polls but long road remains



The Independent High Authority for Elections said May 9 that Tunisian women accounted for 47.7% of the total number of winners and headed 29.55% of the lists in the May 6 municipal elections. These elections, the first after the ousting of the Zine El Abidine Ben Ali regime, constituted a great opportunity for young women in Tunisia to make history and fill positions in political decision-making circles and local government.

The local elections law adopted in 2014 has given way to an unprecedented participation of women, candidates under the age of 35 and people with special needs. The law provides for the principle of gender parity, and this was the first election in the history of Tunisia to have equal numbers of male and female candidates on party, independent and coalition lists.

Souad Abdel Rahim, a 53-year-old pharmacist and member of the Ennahda party’s political bureau, headed her Islamist party’s list for the municipality of Tunis, which won the most seats in the capital with 21, while the secular Nidaa Tunis party won 17. The local council has 60 seats.

Read more:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/tunisia-municipal-elections-women-role-politics.html>



## Women ready to run for office in Egypt



Egypt has yet to pass a law needed to hold local elections, but hundreds of women will not be wallflowers waiting for an invitation to run for office. Thanks to an initiative dubbed “The Councils Are Ours,” potential candidates will be prepared when the elections are finally held for the first time in eight years.

The Tadwein Gender Research Center's program is designed to support women's participation in local council elections. During a conference at the end of April, the women who received training last year were introduced. So far, the project has groomed 320 women in seven of Egypt's 27 governorates. That might seem like a drop in the bucket — considering the Egyptian Constitution allots a quarter of local councils' roughly 64,000 seats to women — but the impetus could increase exponentially.

Training adviser Ahmed Hantish said the project will begin targeting parliamentary seats at a later stage.

Hantish told Al-Monitor the women's education stretches over a year and includes discussions with female decision-makers in parliament such as Nadia Henry and Manal Maher. This could help more women provide input into the pending legislation on local council administration.

Read more:

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/egypt-councils-are-ours-project-empower-women-local-election.html>

## \$3bn pledged for girls education at G7, delighting Malala



Pledges worth nearly \$3 billion dollars to help vulnerable women and girls, including refugees, get an education were announced at a G7 summit on Saturday.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who hosted his fellow leaders at a Quebec resort, called it “the single largest investment in education for women and girls in crisis and conflict situations.”

Canada will provide \$300 million of the total.

The amount was more than feminists groups that met with Trudeau on the sidelines of the summit had asked for, earning the G7 praise from civil society groups and activists, including Nobel prize-winner Malala Yousafzai who said it would “give more girls hope that they can build a brighter future for themselves.”

The fund gives “young women in developing countries the opportunity to pursue careers instead of early marriage and child labor,” Malala, who was shot in the head while campaigning for girls' education in Pakistan, wrote on Twitter.

Canadian Council for International Co-operation's Julia Sanchez called it “a most welcome set of results, especially in the face of the tense political context that has dominated the summit.”

Read more:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1318961/world>

## ***GENDER BASED VIOLENCE***

### **Afghan Government Ignoring Violence Against Women**



It seemed like a breakthrough. In 2009, when then-President Hamid Karzai signed Afghanistan's Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW Law), women's rights activists celebrated a hard-won victory. They looked to a future where Afghan women and girls – about 87 percent of whom experience abuse in their lifetimes – would finally see justice.

But a United Nations report this week confirms what activists have known for years – that violence against women is still largely ignored by the Afghan criminal justice system. A young woman, "Soraya," recently told Human Rights Watch that after her husband attacked her with a knife, and her father-in-law raped her, she went to the police. When she tried to file charges, an officer told her, "We are not going to register your case – it is not important enough. You should resolve this with your family."

UN researchers reviewed 237 cases of women and girls who sought justice, and found that Soraya's experience was typical – most cases never reached a court. Instead, authorities routinely turned victims away or referred them to – and pressured them to accept – mediation. Mediation is used – in clear violation of the EVAW Law – even when women suffered crimes such as rape, acid attacks, and forced prostitution.

Read more:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/30/afghan-government-ignoring-violence-against-women>

### **World failing Yazidi women forced into sex slavery**



The world is failing Yazidi women forced into sex slavery by Daesh militants in Iraq and Syria, with 3,000 still unaccounted for, according to the head of a charity dedicated to helping survivors recover from their horrific experiences.

Murad Ismael said many Yazidi women and girls have been brainwashed or killed in captivity, while those who have managed to escape after years of enslavement and rape were left struggling to survive without an income or identity papers.

"Every inch of these women's body and soul is broken," said Ismael, executive director of Yazda.

"And yet the international system is failing to embrace them and help them return to normal life," said Ismael ahead of the Foundation's Trust Conference on modern slavery in Brussels on Wednesday.

"These girls, they just want to resume school, go back to normal. But they're not given any income or support so many of them have to be a father and a mother to their siblings, in addition to being a survivor."

The Yazidi, a religious sect whose beliefs combine elements of ancient Middle Eastern religions, are regarded by Daesh as devil-worshippers.

Read more:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1317056/middle-east>

## Female police officers to combat sexual harassment in Eid



Eid in Egypt has come to be associated with sexual harassment over the last decade, stirring controversy across the country. This has led the Ministry of Interior to increase female police patrols in an effort to detect and report incidents of harassment and arrest harassers.

Female police officers revealed on Saturday, their plans and preparations for the three-day holiday, which begins Sunday. Female officers have been equipped with several items to assist them in their duties, such as iron batons.

“Anyone who would harass a woman would regret it,” one policewoman said.

Female police will be present heavily in Greater Cairo, where most incidents occur, especially in parks, cinemas, metro stations and other crowded areas.

Legal experts told Egypt Today that the punishment for verbal harassment is one year in prison, while physical harassment could land the offender in prison for five to seven years.

Due to the increase in crimes of violence against women, the Ministry of Interior established a department to combat the phenomenon in May 2013; the department recruits mainly female officers.

Read more:

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/8802/Female-police-officers-to-combat-sexual-harassment-in-Eid>

## Child brides another casualty of Syrian war



Layla was 15 when her parents married her off to the first suitor after her family were forced to leave their home in a Damascus suburb.

Now a mother of three, she works as a manicurist in a beauty salon in Abu Rummaneh, an upscale neighborhood of the Syrian capital.

While still only 20, the wrinkles starting to form around the young woman’s eyes are a hint of the hardship that she has faced — another person suffering from the devastating civil war.

“The money I make here is barely enough to cover our basic needs, so I clean houses on Mondays — my day off,” she said.

“I want my daughters to receive a good education and become independent women, even if I had to mop floors for the rest of my life.”

The rate of child marriage in Syria was less than 7 percent before 2011, but since the war started the figure has more than doubled to 14 percent, according to Syrian Justice Ministry figures.

However, a 2017 report by the Syrian Center for Legal Research and Studies reported another increase of 30 percent since 2015.

Read more:

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1319956/offbeat>



## ***GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS***

### **Palestine: 'Marry-Your-Rapist' Law Repealed**



The Palestinian Authority's repeal of certain discriminatory provisions against women in March 2018 is a good first step toward what should be the repeal of a series of such measures, Human Rights Watch said today. Other forms of discrimination include birth registration, personal status laws, and gaps in accountability for domestic violence. Palestine should make such reforms ahead of the first review of its record on women's rights before the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – the body that monitors the international women's rights treaty – in Geneva in July.

On March 14, 2018, the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, signed Law no. 5 of 2018, which repealed article 308 of the 1960 Penal Code enforced in the West Bank. Based on an assessment by the head of a women's shelter, the law had allowed alleged rapists to escape prosecution and could allow convicted rapists to avoid imprisonment if they married their victims. The new law also amended article 99 to prohibit judges from reducing sentences for serious crimes, such as the murder of women and children.

Read more:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/10/palestine-marry-your-rapist-law-repealed>

### **Rights groups condemn Saudi women activists' arrests**

International rights groups have condemned the arrests this week of at least seven prominent Saudi Arabian women's rights activists who previously campaigned for the right to drive, which the conservative kingdom is set to grant from next month.

The decision to end a decades-old ban on women driving cars has been hailed as proof of a new progressive trend under reform-minded Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, but has been accompanied by a crackdown on dissent.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch called on the authorities to release the detainees, identifying six of them as Eman al-Nafjan, Lujain al-Hathloul, Aziz al-Yousef, Aisha al-Manea, Ibrahim Modeimigh and Mohammed al-Rabea. Some are women, and others are men who have campaigned for women's rights.

Authorities said in an overnight statement that they were still identifying others allegedly involved in activities that “encroach on religious and national constants”, and fellow activists said others had been arrested but the total number was not immediately clear.

“It appears the only ‘crime’ these activists committed was wanting women to drive before Mohammed bin Salman did,” said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch.

Women will be allowed to drive starting on June 24. Activists and analysts say, however, that the government is keen to avoid rewarding activism, which is forbidden in the absolute monarchy. The authorities also may aim to avoid antagonizing the sensitivities of religious conservatives opposed to modernization.

Read more:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-arrests/rights-groups-condemn-saudi-women-activists-arrests-idUSKCN11K085>

## Egypt wrangles over whether women should be judges



A row over the appointment of female judges to an influential court that governs administrative law in Egypt has highlighted a general malaise over women holding top jobs.

On Monday Mohammed al-Husseini, the head of the Egyptian state council, overturned a decision by its general assembly which voted by overwhelming majority last week against appointing women judges to the council.

The state council or Maglis al-Dawla is the court authorised to settle administrative disputes concerning the exercise of public power.

Husseini, who said his ruling was supported by the constitution, has since faced a barrage of criticism from fellow judges who want an emergency meeting to overturn his decision.

Some have even sought legal proceedings to have him removed from his post.

The decision to bar women from sitting on the state council is "unconstitutional," said Judge Noha al-Zeini of the administrative prosecution authority, one of only 42 women judges out of the country's 12,000 in total.

She said she was "shocked" by the ban on women sitting on the bench, but conceded that it was a reflection of society's unease with women holding positions of power.

Read more:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatnews/7314826/Egypt-wrangles-over-whether-women-should-be-judges.html>

## Women seeking space in mosques sparks discussion on gender politics



It all began when four women found themselves kicked out of İstanbul's historic Fatih Mosque in March of this year.

The brave four had defied mosque rules and stood for prayer in the area of the mosque allotted for men.

Enraged, they decided to take action. When one of the women posted what had happened on social media, over 40 women organized themselves to come together to stand in prayer in front of the area allotted for women at Fatih Mosque, BBC reported.

This incident became the catalyst for the "Women in Mosques" campaign. The group aims to give women proper space for worship, where they often find themselves in tiny dark rooms next to garbage cans and vacuum cleaners in areas of the mosque that resemble storage facilities more than spots for worship.

Among the leading complaints "Women in Mosques" has are the lack of ablution - pre-prayer washing - facilities for women, the physical condition and neglect of women's prayer areas; inability to experience a congregational prayer due to being forced to pray elsewhere and lack of space for women on Friday's, the Islamic holy day wherein men are obligated to attend prayer.

Read more:

<https://ahvalnews.com/women-turkey/women-seeking-space-mosques-sparks-discussion-gender-politics>



## RESOURCES & CALLS

### BOOKS & REPORTS

#### **Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**

The right to health is an inclusive right, extending not only to timely and appropriate health care, but also to the underlying determinants of health, such as access to safe and potable water and adequate sanitation, healthy occupational and environmental conditions, and access to health-related education and information, including on sexual and reproductive health.

The right to health contains both freedoms and entitlements. Freedoms include the right to control one's health, including the right to be free from non-consensual medical treatment and experimentation. Entitlements include the right to a system of health protection (i.e. health care and the underlying determinants of health) that provides equality of opportunity for people to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health.

The right to health is a broad concept that can be broken down into more specific entitlements such as the rights to: maternal, child and reproductive health; healthy workplace and natural environments; the prevention, treatment and control of diseases, including access to essential medicines; access to safe and potable water.

For more information on the definition of the right to health, please refer to General Comment No. 14 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

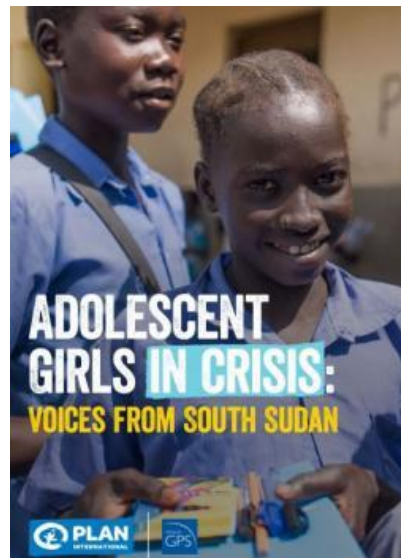
Read more:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Health/Pages/SRRightHealthIndex.aspx>

For a direct link to publication:

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/101/42/PDF/G1810142.pdf?OpenElement>

## **Adolescent Girls in Crisis: Voices From South Sudan**



In the last 5 years, the conflict in South Sudan has displaced 4 million people and placed 7 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

Everyone concerned has had their lives torn apart with adolescent girls suffering worst.

Their physical safety, their health and their future prospects are all threatened in ways that differ from the risks faced by adolescent boys and adults. Often, too, just because they are young and female, their rights and needs are ignored.

This report commissioned by Plan International draws on research conducted with girls and members of their families and communities in multiple sites in South Sudan and Uganda.

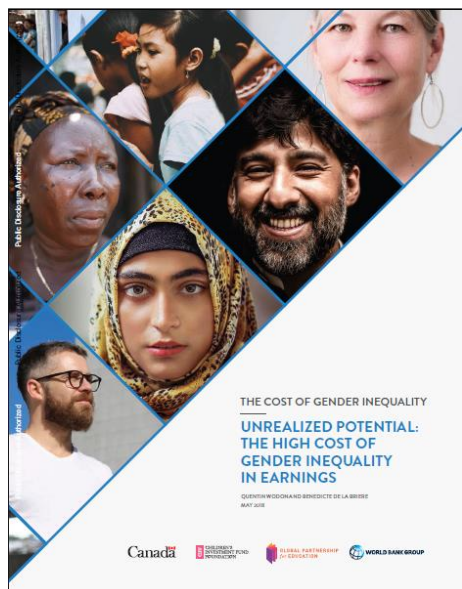
It explores how adolescent girls within two age brackets (aged 10-14 and 15-19) understand and respond to the unique impact their country's crisis has upon them.

It seeks to amplify their voices and their perceptions of the crisis and presents their views on how the humanitarian sector might respond.

Read more:

<https://plan-international.org/publications/girls-crisis-south-sudan>

## The Cost of Gender Inequality: Unrealized Potential: The High Cost Of Gender Inequality in Earnings



Gender equality would enrich the global economy by an estimated \$160tn (£120tn) if women were earning as much as men in the workplace, a study by the World Bank has found.

Equal pay, equal hours and equal participation in the workforce could lead to a global wealth jump of \$23,620 a person, as well as creating knock-on benefits such as lower malnutrition and child mortality rates, said the report.

Using data from 141 countries, economists analysed the potential skills, education, training and future worth of each person in the workforce, then compared those so-called “lifetime earnings” to generate estimated global losses.

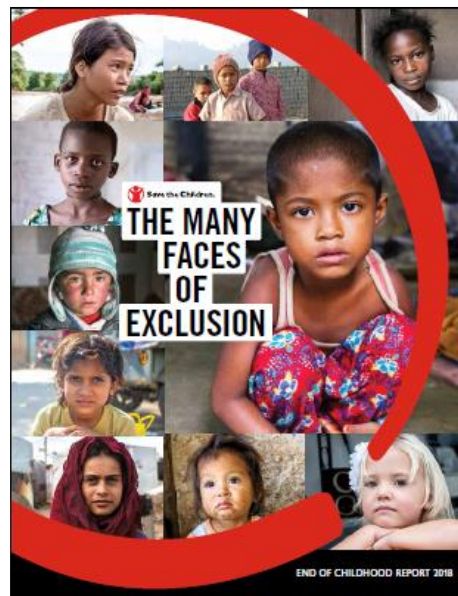
Read more:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/may/31/gender-pay-gap-costs-global-economy-160tn-world-bank-study>

For a direct link to publication:

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/29865/126579-Public-on-5-30-18-WorldBank-GenderInequality-Brief-v13.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

## End of Childhood Report 2018: The Many Faces of Exclusion



In commemoration of International Children’s Day, Save the Children releases its second annual End of Childhood Index, taking a hard look at the events that rob children of their childhoods and prevent them from reaching their full potential.

Compared to last year, the index finds the overall situation for children appears more favorable in 95 of 175 countries. This is welcome news – and it shows that investments and policies are working to lift up many of our children. But the index also shows progress is not happening fast enough, and conditions appear considerably worse in about 40 countries. Lost childhoods are increasingly concentrated among the poorest children and children affected by conflict. These conditions tend to exacerbate gender bias and increase negative experiences that end childhood for girls.

Read more:

<https://wunrn.com/2018/06/save-the-children-report-2018-the-many-faces-of-exclusion-gender/>

For a direct link to publication:

<https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/global/reports/2018-end-of-childhood-report.pdf>

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