



The Middle East & North Africa  
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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: AVIVA, [www.aviva.org](http://www.aviva.org), AWID: [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org), Democracy Digest: [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org), Development Gateway: [www.developmentgateway.org](http://www.developmentgateway.org), Dignity: [www.dignity.org](http://www.dignity.org), e-Civicus: [www.civicus.org](http://www.civicus.org), Eldis: [www.eldis.org](http://www.eldis.org), ESCWA: [www.escwa.org.lb](http://www.escwa.org.lb), GDB: [www.developmentex.com](http://www.developmentex.com), Global Knowledge Partnership: [www.globalknowledge.org](http://www.globalknowledge.org), IGTN: [www.IGTN.org](http://www.IGTN.org), ILO: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) One World: [www.oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net), Siyanda: [www.siyanda.org](http://www.siyanda.org), The Daily Star: [www.dailystar.com.lb](http://www.dailystar.com.lb), The Drum Beat: [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com), The Soul Beat: [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com), The World Bank: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), UNDP: [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org), Wicejilist: [www.wicej.addr.com](http://www.wicej.addr.com), WLP: [www.learningpartnership.org](http://www.learningpartnership.org); WIDE: [www.wide-network.org](http://www.wide-network.org); IRIN News: [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org), Women's UN Report Network: [www.wunrn.com](http://www.wunrn.com), Women Living Under Muslim Laws: [www.wluml.org](http://www.wluml.org)

## NEWS & ARTICLES

### GENDER ACTIVISM

#### Revolution, Women and Social Media in the Middle East

"The power of women is in their stories. They are not theories, they are real lives that, thanks to social networks, we are able to share and exchange," said Egyptian-American activist Mona el-Tahawey, kicking off a summit that brought more than a hundred of the Middle East's leading female activists together in Cairo.

With her arms still bandaged from the assault she suffered at the hands of Egypt's ruling military power last November, Tahawey was greeted like a celebrity by cyberactivists who only knew her from Twitter as she kicked off the Yahoo! Change Your World Cairo summit Wednesday.

The event brought together many of the region's leading activists to tell their stories of revolutions -- both successful and unsuccessful -- and discuss how women were using social and digital media to bring about positive change. Although they acknowledged the offline work that goes into human rights and political reform work, many were explicit in crediting social media with changing the dynamics in authoritarian countries throughout the region.

"I couldn't have done this without social media. The world would not have known," said 20-year-old Libyan cyberactivist Danya Bashir, who describes herself as the first female president of Libya on her [Twitter profile](#). During the Libyan uprising she began using Twitter extensively to provide information about what was happening on the ground to journalists and activists around the world. She said she would "spam" Twitter superstars like [Tahawey](#), NPR's Andy Carvin (@[acarvin](#)) and Arab commentator Sultan al Qassemi (@[SultanAlQassemi](#)).

In a panel on journalism and the internet, exiled Bahraini journalist Lamees Dhaif dismissed her government's attempts to censor her, noting that she had nearly [60,000 followers on Twitter](#) and 43,000 followers of her website whereas the biggest newspaper in Bahrain prints a mere 12,000 copies daily. "Now people are outspoken because of these tools," said Lamees. <http://www.wluml.org/news/mena-revolution-women-and-social-media-middle-east>

#### Lebanese demonstrate for legal protection against domestic violence

Hundreds of Lebanese gathered in Downtown Beirut over the weekend to protest the country's lack of legislation against domestic violence. Nearly 300 supporters took part in the rally, dubbed STOP Domestic Violence Against Women, which was held at Samir Kassir Square Saturday.

Local activists organized the demonstration to raise awareness of Lebanon's lack of laws protecting women from domestic abuse, including spousal rape and physical violence.



Protesters carried signs reading, “If you want a chick, go buy an egg,” “Adam and Even,” and “All marriages are sacred, but not all are safe.” A similar march against rape last month drew around 600 people.

“In Lebanon, women don’t know the laws that don’t protect them,” said Hala Akiki, who organized the event through a campaign that included billboards, television ads and fliers, with the support of her employer, advertising agency Leo Burnett.

The advertisements, which have been running for the past several weeks, show a woman with a black eye, beneath the words, “Legally, he can still abuse you.”

Akiki says that the original caption, “He will legally rape you,” was deemed too inflammatory for Lebanon’s General Security authorities, but the words remain on the group’s Facebook page.

Plans for the protest came following a series of leaks from Parliament, which has been reviewing a domestic violence draft law since April 2010.

The proposed legislation, drafted by the NGO Kafa and supported by dozens of other groups, calls for the punishment of men who physically or sexually abuse their wives.

Currently, there’s no such legislation, with all family law being governed by religious courts, which tend to favor men.

Critics argue that the parliamentary committee tasked with studying the law has made so many concessions that the proposed legislation has become irrelevant.

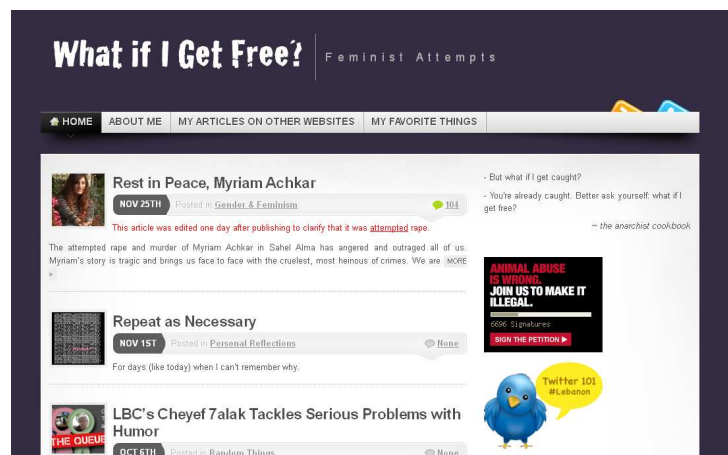
The committee is made up of eight MPs (seven men and one woman): Samir Jisr, Nabil Nicolas, Michel Helou, Gilberte Zouein, Ghassan Moukheiber, Ali Ammar, Imad Hout and Shant Jinjinian.

One of the most controversial amendments made by the group removed a clause in the draft law that would outlaw spousal rape; Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Feb-20/163903-lebanese-demonstrate-for-legal-protection-against-domestic-violence.ashx#ixzz1mvyIbMiW>



### 'Something Phenomenal in Women's Sexual Freedom' in Lebanon/MENA

When the topic of “taboos” surfaces in our region, what immediately comes to mind are all issues related to sexuality. Then the question becomes, “whose responsibility is it to address such taboos?” My answer: all of us, yours and mine together have been working on sexual rights in the Middle East and North Africa for the past four years. Most people are not aware of it, but there is a large and growing movement for sexual rights happening beneath the surface of all other movements, including the feminist movement. One prominent actor in this field is the Coalition of Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies, which was founded in 2001. As member organizations of this coalition, we organize an annual event “One Day, One Struggle” to highlight diverse aspects of sexuality across our countries. Feminist activists often tell me, “You know, we don’t know any lesbians, we don’t know any people who have been raped, we don’t know women who want abortions; they are not part of our circle.” Truth is, they are very much part of our circle. The big question, especially for the well-established feminists in the Arab region, is will Arab feminism embrace sexual rights or not? Unless it does, it will never find those masses of women



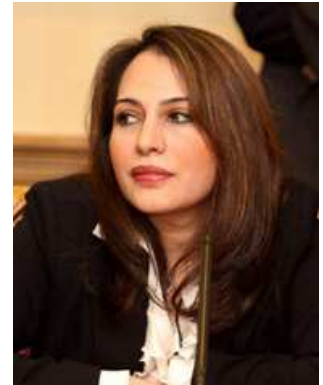
who are sexually oppressed. They will never come to talk to a movement that doesn't want to work with them. To read the article please follow the link

<http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/donate-now/telling-our-stories/1977-something-phenomenal-in-womens-sexual-freedom>

### 'No Arab Spring without Women' in Lebanon

Under the banner of "No Spring without Women," a Lebanese feminist organisation has organized a march in Beirut, as part of the 5th New Arab Woman Forum. The slogan of the march is "Sawa Sawa", which in this context means "Let's walk together, let's make it together", calling for a Spring that includes both men and women. Before getting the invitation to this march, my mind was already preoccupied with the future of Arab women after the revolutions and how women's status might be impacted in each of the Arab countries. My concern is: can there be Arab union or organisation to sustain Arab women's status in the post-revolution era? To read more about the sawa sawa initiative please check:

<http://english.alarabiya.net/views/2012/01/25/190506.html>



### Appel à la pratique de l'excision par un imam : les autorités doivent réagir

La FIDH soutient les plaintes déposées devant la justice tunisienne par des associations, dont l'Association tunisienne des femmes démocrates (ATFD) et un collectif d'avocats, contre l'Imam égyptien Wajdi Ghoneim, pour incitation à la violence et à la haine et contre les associations qui l'ont invité, pour instrumentalisation des lieux de culte.



La FIDH est scandalisée par les propos tenus cette semaine par Wajdi Ghoneim qui, en visite en Tunisie a appelé à la pratique de l'excision, la qualifiant de « simple opération esthétique ». Le prédicateur a tenu de nombreuses conférences dans des mosquées, ainsi qu'au palais des sports d'El Menzah, lieu public sous la responsabilité du ministère de la Jeunesse et du Sport.

L'excision est une pratique totalement inconnue en Tunisie et condamnée par le droit international comme pratique dégradante et inhumaine.

Si la FIDH salue les réactions du ministre de la culture et du ministre du culte, dénonçant ses propos, elle n'en attend pas moins une condamnation ferme de la part des autorités tunisiennes dans leur ensemble. « De tels propos sont intolérables, ils prônent la violence. Il est impératif qu'ils soient condamnés au plus haut niveau de l'Etat », a déclaré Souhayr Belhassen, présidente de la FIDH. To read the statement please follow the link <http://www.fidh.org/Appel-a-la-pratique-de-l-excision>

### GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

#### Syria frees iconic blogger Ghazzawi: lawyer

The Syrian authorities have freed blogger Razan Ghazzawi, symbol of an 11-month uprising, and six other female activists arrested last week, a human rights lawyer said on Monday.

The women were released on Saturday, but were ordered to report to police daily in order to continue their questioning, the lawyer, Anwar Bunni, told AFP.

They were part of a group of 14 activists people arrested Thursday in a raid on the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression, a group headed by rights activist Mazen Darwish.

Darwish and the others remain in custody, Bunni said, adding that police were investigating origins of information used by the centre, as well as its





sources of funding. Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Feb-20/163973-syria-frees-iconic-blogger-ghazzawi-lawyer.ashx#ixzz1mvupuYuE>

### Why the Question of Palestine is a Feminist Concern

I was recently part of a fact-finding delegation to Palestine organized by the US Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. The delegation was composed of concerned academics and scholars based in the U.S., including myself. [i] During our weeklong investigative trip, we were witness to multiple and varied testimonies to and clear evidence of the daily acts of violence, harassment and humiliation that Palestinians are subjected to, both massive and intimate. Individuals from several families living in Eastern Jerusalem told us their personal stories of being physically thrown out of their homes in the middle of the night, their houses pillaged and taken over by settlers (many of whom were only recently residents of the U.S.), their belongings strewn onto the streets only to be looted by morning, their children targeted to bear recurring nightmares of the punishing character of their eviction (being made to see, for example, the displayed burning of their dolls alongside that of their beds). For Palestinians who were already refugees from the 1948 territorial establishment of the Israeli state, they have been forced to become refugees several times over in their own cities and neighborhoods, repeatedly made homeless beside their own homes (their makeshift tents burned numerous times), as ever-expanding settlements cause their displacement and military-protected settlers relentlessly and with impunity inflict upon them small and traumatic forms of abuse and cruelty intended to make Palestinian life in the areas claimed and colonized by the Israeli state exceedingly painful and difficult, if not impossible. To read all the article follow the link



<http://thefeministwire.com/2012/01/why-the-question-of-palestine-is-a-feminist-concern/>

### UN Women Completes One Year their Action Plan is to Advance Equality

At a press conference in New York on February 2, UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet called for galvanizing greater commitment and action for women and gender equality, as political and economic upheaval threaten progress on women's rights. She called the press conference to report on the first year of operations of UN Women. With austerity measures, budget cuts and political changes impacting women's lives, worldwide, Ms. Bachelet outlined the action agenda of the organization in her first press conference of 2012.



“My top priority for 2012 will be to make a renewed push for women's economic empowerment and political participation. This is in response to women's demands and also to recent events, to the transformations taking place in the political, social and economic spheres,” said Ms. Bachelet. “With rising demand for justice, upcoming elections in many countries and political transition, we can open doors wider for women in pursuit of the dignity and rights which all human beings are entitled,” she added.

Focusing strongly on the two major developments that dominated global debate in 2011— the democracy movements in the Arab States and the continued financial and economic crisis — Ms. Bachelet highlighted the challenges that have emerged for women's rights, but also the opportunities, and the UN Women response to the changing geo-political scenarios. UN Women,

for instance, supported the establishment of the Egyptian Women's Union, an association of 500 groups, and facilitated the formulation of their demands in the Egyptian Women's Charter.  
[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/02\\_12/01\\_30/013012\\_un2.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/02_12/01_30/013012_un2.htm)

## An Open Letter to Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch

Dear Kenneth Roth,

In your Introduction to Human Rights Watch's World Report 2012, "Time to Abandon the Autocrats and Embrace Rights," you urge support for the newly elected governments that have brought the Muslim Brotherhood to power in Tunisia and Egypt. In your desire to "constructively engage" with the new governments, you ask states to stop supporting autocrats. But you are not a state; you are the head of an international human rights organization whose role is to report on human rights violations, an honorable and necessary task which your essay largely neglects.



You say, "It is important to nurture the rights-respecting elements of political Islam while standing firm against repression in its name," but you fail to call for the most basic guarantee of rights—the separation of religion from the state. Salafi mobs have caned women in Tunisian cafes and Egyptian shops; attacked churches in Egypt; taken over whole villages in Tunisia and shut down Manouba University for two months in an effort to exert social pressure on veiling. And while "moderate Islamist" leaders say they will protect the rights of women (if not gays), they have done very little to bring these mobs under control. You, however, are so unconcerned with the rights of women, gays, and religious minorities that you mention them only once, as follows: "Many Islamic parties have indeed embraced disturbing positions that would subjugate the rights of women and restrict religious, personal, and political freedoms. But so have many of the autocratic regimes that the West props up." Are we really going to set the bar that low? This is the voice of an apologist, not a senior human rights advocate. To continue reading the letter, follow the link <http://www.wluml.org/news/international-open-letter-kenneth-roth-executive-director-human-rights-watch>

### Bill Against Prostitution BUYERS Moves Forward

Prostitution is violence against women. Everything should be done to diminish, if not completely eradicate, this horrible phenomenon, dubbed inappropriately "the world's oldest profession," as if its long history somehow gives it respectability.

The Ministerial Committee on Legislation took an important step toward achieving this goal Sunday when it unanimously passed a bill by MK Orit Zuretz (Kadima), who chairs the Knesset Subcommittee on Trafficking in Women.

If ratified, Zuretz's bill would make it illegal to buy sexual services but not to sell them.

The legislation's eminently reasonable underlying assumption is that prostitutes - mostly women - are victims of an industry said to generate revenues of \$2 billion a year in Israel, while those who solicit, pimp or facilitate sexual favors - primarily men - are the ones guilty of exploiting, raping and abusing those who are weaker and more vulnerable, and therefore, deserve to be singled out for punishment. Critics of the bill argue that targeting prostitutes' clients will make an already dangerous work



environment even more hazardous. Those who disregard the new law will tend to be more dangerous, violent types. The decrease in the number of clients will lead to cutthroat competition among the remaining prostitutes, who will earn less and might be put under pressure to have sex without protection. And the entire industry will go underground.

But thousands of prostitutes are already working in horrid conditions, forced to maximize profits by working long hours with as many as a dozen clients a day. Some prostitutes live under constant physical threat. Others are addicted to heroin or other drugs, while still others were victims of sexual abuse as children and found their way to prostitution due to low self-esteem or other psychological problems. To continue reading the news

[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/02\\_12/02\\_13/021312\\_israel.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/02_12/02_13/021312_israel.htm)

## GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

### Saudi Arabia should 'End Ban on Women in Sport'

As the world prepares for the 2012 Olympics, the Saudi government is systematically discriminating against women in sports and physical education, and has never sent a female athlete to the Olympics, with no penalty from the international Olympic authorities, Human Rights Watch said in a new report released today. Human Rights Watch called on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to make ending discrimination against women in sports in the kingdom a condition for Saudi Arabia's participation in Olympic sporting events, including the 2012 London Games. "No women allowed," is the kingdom's message to Saudi women and girls who want to play sports," said Christoph Wilcke, senior Middle East researcher at Human Rights Watch. "The fact that women and girls cannot train to compete clearly violates the Olympic Charter's pledge to equality and gives the Olympic movement itself a black eye."

The 51-page report, "['Steps of the Devil': Denial of Women and Girls' Right to Sport in Saudi Arabia](#)," documents discrimination by

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education in denying girls physical education in state schools, as well as discriminatory practices by the General Presidency for Youth Welfare, a youth and sports ministry, in licensing women's gyms and supporting only all-male sports clubs. The National Olympic Committee of Saudi Arabia also has no programs for women athletes and has not fielded women in past Olympic Games. More information on <http://www.wluml.org/news/saudi-arabia-end-ban-women-sport-0>



### Creating a counter culture to violence: Women Living Under Muslim Laws

Acid sprayed on two Afghani school girls on their way to school, a 15 year old Pakistani girl found dead, killed by her brother, a son killing his mother for a suspected affair in Uttar Pradesh, these are just a few of the 'honour killings' reported by Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) in 2011. '[Violence is Not Our Culture](#)' campaign coordinated by Women Living Under Muslim Laws seeks to put an end to violence perpetrated in the name of religion and culture in Muslim countries.

With the support of the MDG3 Fund WLUML strengthens women's



**violence is not our culture**

the global campaign to stop violence against women in the name of culture

individual and collective struggles for equality and their rights, in Muslim contexts where women's lives are shaped, conditioned or governed by laws and customs said to be derived from Islam. The MDG3 Fund is supporting their work specifically in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal and Sudan.



The project rejects the notion that violence is part of Muslim culture, religion, or traditions. The campaign reports and exposes CVAW where it occurs in order to defeat the widespread mis-use of religion and culture against women. The campaign aims to end all forms of violence be it stoning, whipping/lashing, and 'honour' killings, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment, acid attacks.

As well as providing advocacy and support WLUML courageously tackles the deeper level of reclaiming and refining Muslim culture in order to enable women to repossess and reconstruct cultural resources including within 'religion' and 'tradition'. The Campaign is in defiance of the cultural/religious discourse which denies women's rights. As well as running an active and informative website documenting cases the campaign is building skills of the women in the countries. From boxing training for young lesbians in Jakarta, Indonesia to providing information on shelters for women who are experiencing violence in the home. To read more follow the link <http://www.wluml.org/news/creating-counter-culture-violence-women-living-under-muslim-laws-wluml>

### Kuwait couple gets death for Filipina murder: report

A court has sentenced a Kuwaiti couple to death for beating and then murdering their Filipina domestic helper, newspapers in the Gulf state reported on Monday.

The criminal court found the disabled husband and his wife guilty of "premeditated murder" after throwing the maid from their car and driving over her, Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa dailies reported, citing the verdict.

No names were published in the reports, for the couple or the maid. Newspapers said that based on testimony by one of the couple's sons, the wife beat the maid for days until her health deteriorated. The boy told interrogators that his parents had said they were taking the maid to hospital for treatment, but that he never saw her again. According to the ruling, the couple took the maid, who was "unconscious" at the time, to a remote area in the desert where they threw her from the back seat of the car and then drove over her until she died.

About 73,000 Filipinos -- 60,000 of them women working mostly as maids -- live in oil-rich Kuwait, where some 600,000 domestic helpers, mostly Asians, are employed. Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Feb-20/163946-kuwait-couple-gets-death-for-filipina-murder-report.ashx#ixzz1mvxOwYld>



### Despite great strides in education and employment, a large gender gap remains in positions of status

Women in the GCC countries have not yet made it to the top. While their share of the workforce is increasing, it is still hard for them to reach senior positions, which are mostly held by men. Although this is a worldwide phenomenon, it is particularly striking in the Gulf region where leadership has been traditionally perceived in male terms. As a result, women in the region continue to be under-represented in decision-making positions in many fields and their progress has been slow. Women's lives in the GCC have improved tremendously during the past decades. They have become better educated and, according to United Nations data, the adult literacy rates for women have increased considerably, reaching 90 percent

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Gulf Research Center. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Login', 'Arabic', 'MEMBERS', 'ABOUT GRC', 'ABOUT THE SITE', 'GET INVOLVED', 'CONTACT', and 'SEARCH'. Below this is a main header with the center's logo and name in Arabic and English. A secondary navigation bar includes 'Click Here To Donate', 'Home', 'Research Programs', and 'Gulf Energy Program'. The main content area displays an article titled 'Women in GCC' with a sub-headline 'It is Still Hard for Women to Get Senior Jobs' by Mona Al-Munajjed. The article text begins with 'Despite great strides in education and employment, a large gender gap remains in positions of status.' A sidebar on the right contains a 'Home' menu with links to 'Program Overview', 'News', 'GRC Resources', and 'External Resources'.



in Bahrain, 92 percent in Kuwait (2008), 81 percent in Oman (2008), 92 percent in Qatar (2009), 81 percent in Saudi Arabia (2009) and 91 percent in the UAE (2005). More educated women have joined the labor market and, in 2010, the percentage of female employment to population ratio (15+) reached its highest in Qatar with 50.5 percent, with Kuwait following at 42.3 percent, UAE at 37.5 percent, Bahrain at 31.4 percent, Oman at 23.6 percent and Saudi Arabia at 14.6 percent. However, despite great strides in education and employment, a large gender gap remains in positions of status. Women may be as qualified as men but they seldom work in jobs with power and authority; they also experience considerable delay in attaining the higher levels of jobs and income.

United Nations data closest to year 2010 indicate that women's share of key roles such as legislators, senior officials and managers reached 22 percent in Bahrain, 14 percent in Kuwait, 10 percent in the UAE, 8 percent in Saudi Arabia, and only 7 percent in Qatar. Most of these percentages compare unfavorably with other countries in Asia such as Malaysia (24 percent) and Indonesia (22 percent), and even more so with the USA (43 percent) and Europe (France 39 percent, Germany 38 percent, the UK 35 percent, Sweden and Spain 32 percent, and Switzerland 30 percent).

[http://www.grc.ae/?Search=&frm\\_title=&frm\\_action=detail\\_book&frm\\_module=contents&frm\\_researchprogramid=14&p\\_id=&sec=Research+Programs&book\\_id=77801&frm\\_pageno=&sec\\_type=d&isgrc=&frm\\_type\\_id=&override=Research+Program+Detail+%3E+It+is+Still+Hard+for+Women+to+Get+Senior+Jobs&op\\_lang=en](http://www.grc.ae/?Search=&frm_title=&frm_action=detail_book&frm_module=contents&frm_researchprogramid=14&p_id=&sec=Research+Programs&book_id=77801&frm_pageno=&sec_type=d&isgrc=&frm_type_id=&override=Research+Program+Detail+%3E+It+is+Still+Hard+for+Women+to+Get+Senior+Jobs&op_lang=en)

### Passage of Islamic Penal Code Violates Women Rights In Iran

Following a meeting on January 18, 2011, the Guardian Council ratified the final text of the new

Links Human Rights' Violators' Data Bank Users Support Archives

Islamic Penal Code and did not find any part of this code to be in contravention of Islamic Sharia law and the Iranian Constitution. Passage of this code renders the former penal Code ineffective, providing the new and more severe code as replacement.



Prior to this and on multiple occasions, Justice For Iran and other monitoring and human rights organizations had expressed their concerns and reservations regarding the text of the new Code and yet, the Islamic Republic paid no mind to any of the said concerns.

Justice For Iran's most serious concerns were:

1- In the former Code, any form of sexual relations out of wedlock is a crime; sexual extramarital affair of men and women will carry the punishment of stoning. In the new Code, the articles pertaining to the punishment of stoning (rajm) and all details of the manner of execution of this punishment has been omitted from the section. However, any form of sexual relations out of wedlock is still a crime. In other words, although the new Code considers sexual relations that take place out of wedlock to be a crime for both men and women, it does not prescribe a punishment for this crime. Initially, the omission of stoning from the Penal Code appears to be a positive development. But careful inspection of article 167 proves otherwise and affirms our concern. This article which stands opposed to the principle of legality of crimes and punishments, recognized in all valid legal systems, prescribes: "The judge is duty bound to make all efforts to find the proper sentence in the codified laws. If he fails to do so he should issued the sentence in accordance with the valid Islamic sources or valid fatawi. The judge cannot use the absence or insufficiency or brevity or conflict of the codified laws as excuse to refuse to issue a verdict." Although stoning was omitted from the section under zena—adultery, it is mentioned in other sections such as under articles 172 and 198 which further emphasizes the severity of our concern.

In other words, the new codification means that stoning is omitted from the Penal Code as a form of punishment. However, the judges will be free to refer to the shari'a based fatwas for issuing a sentence of stoning and prescribing the manners in which it would be carried out.

2- Now that the new Code, the punishment of execution will no longer be issued for minors who were charged with certain crimes, such as smuggling narcotics. However, it is still very likely that individuals under the age of 18 who have committed murder will be sentenced to execution. Based on the new Code, minors will only be exempt from execution if they can prove that they do not have the mental capacity to understand the nature or prohibition of their actions.

3- Multiple articles in the new Code are concerned with increasing the severity of punishments for people charged with "action against national security." This is while presently almost all of the political prisoners and prisoners of conscience have been accused of "actions against national security" due to their activities in the fields of human rights, civil society, journalism, defending the rights of the minorities, or even for being a member of the Baha'i community. For example, under the new Code, the punishments issued for individuals who have been sentenced to imprisonment or lashing for "actions against national security" can in no way be suspended or subject to a statute of limitation. To read more about the concerns

<http://justiceforiran.org/ipc/?lang=en>

## **CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS**

### **UAE grants citizenship to 1,117 'foreign' children**

The president of the United Arab Emirates has issued a decree granting citizenship to more than 1,000 children of Emirati women married to foreigners, the official WAM news agency reported on Sunday.

"President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahayan has issued decrees granting citizenship to 1,117 children of UAE women married to foreigners who satisfied requirements for citizenship," WAM reported.

The children will receive full citizenship when they reach the age of 18, the agency said.

Most Arab countries link nationality to blood relation from the father's side, disenfranchising women who face various forms of gender discrimination across the region.

Tunisia had for a long time been the only country that gave men and women equal nationality rights with few other countries responding to continued campaigns for the regulation to be changed.

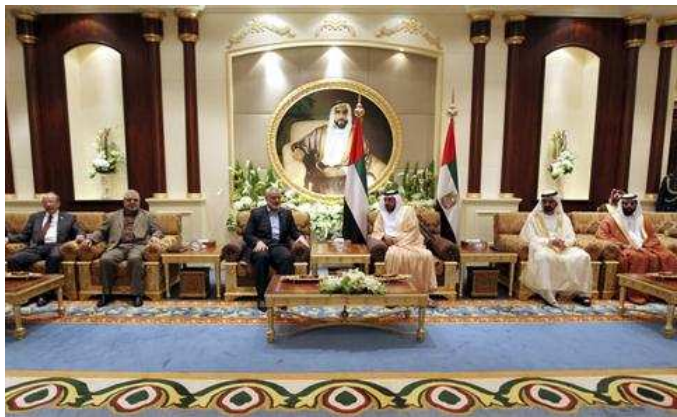
But in 2005, Algeria amended its nationality law, giving women the right to pass citizenship to their foreign husbands and children.

In 2007, Morocco said the children of Moroccan women will automatically get the nationality, while foreign husbands can demand the citizenship after five years of marriage and residency in the country.

Egypt followed suit giving women the right to pass their citizenship to their children.

The campaign continues in many other Arab countries.

Home to a huge expatriate community, the oil-rich UAE has an overall population of 8.26 million, with UAE citizens representing around 11.47 percent, according to official figures released last April. Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Feb-19/163863-uae-grants-citizenship-to-1117-foreign-children.ashx#ixzz1mvyZadCI>



## RESOURCES & CALLS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS and EVENTS

#### CSW 56 Side Events Schedule on UN Premises

The Commission on the Status of Women (hereafter referred to as “CSW” or “the Commission”) is

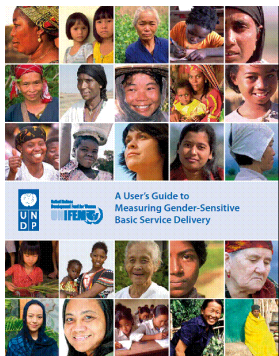


a functional commission of the [United Nations Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#). It is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. As for the list and schedule of the side events:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/side-events.html>

### BOOKS AND REPORTS

#### Gender Statistics & Gender Disaggregation



Gender statistics is an area that cuts across traditional fields of statistics to identify, produce and disseminate statistics that reflect the realities of the lives of women and men, and policy issues relating to gender. Statistics and indicators on the situation of women and men are needed to describe the role of women and men in the society, economy and family, formulate and monitor policies and plans, monitor changes, and inform the public. To download the full report:

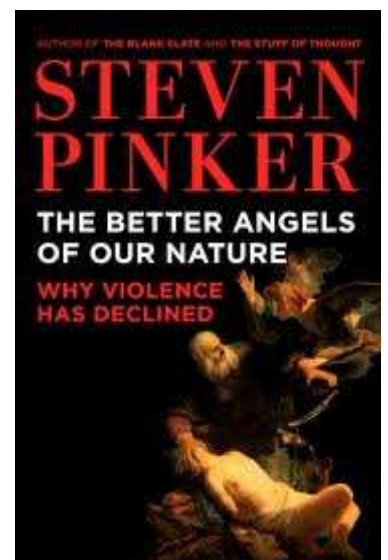
[http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UsersGuide2MeasuringGenderSensitiveBasicDeliveryService\\_en.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/UsersGuide2MeasuringGenderSensitiveBasicDeliveryService_en.pdf)

#### Yes, the world would be more peaceful with women in charge

Would the world be more peaceful if women were in charge? A challenging new book by the Harvard University psychologist Steven Pinker says that the answer is “yes.”

In “The Better Angels of Our Nature,” Pinker presents data showing that human violence, while still very much with us today, has been gradually declining. Moreover, he says, “over the long sweep of history, women have been and will be a pacifying force. Traditional war is a man’s game: Tribal women never band together to raid neighboring villages.” As mothers, women have evolutionary incentives to maintain peaceful conditions in which to nurture their offspring and ensure that their genes survive into the next generation.

Skeptics immediately reply that women have not made war simply because they have rarely been in power. If they were empowered as leaders, the conditions of an anarchic world would force them to make the same bellicose decisions that men do. Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir and Indira Gandhi were powerful women; all of them led their countries to war.





But it is also true that these women rose to leadership by playing according to the political rules of “a man’s world.” It was their success in conforming to male values that enabled their rise to leadership in the first place. In a world in which women held a proportionate share (one-half) of leadership positions, they might behave differently in power. Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Commentary/2012/Feb-18/163734-yes-the-world-would-be-more-peaceful-with-women-in-charge.ashx#ixzz1mvzWqVuu>

### **The Lessons of January 11, 1992: Remembering the Cancellation of Algeria’s Elections in the Wake of the “Arab Autumn”**

Twenty years ago today Algeria’s military-backed government stopped the country’s electoral process, preventing the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) from coming to power and dismantling the Algerian republic - something it had openly promised to do. In context, this was the better of the two bad alternatives available at that moment - interrupting a flawed parliamentary election rather than allowing the reins of power to be taken by fascists who openly proclaimed their opposition to democracy. I am certain that much ink will be spilled this week lecturing Algerians on how much better things would have turned out if they had not done so. However, too much blood has been spilled for the history to be so obscured. There is a [standard narrative](#) about these events in most English language accounts. Democratic elections were sailing along. The Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win. The army intervened. The trouble started.



This narrative is a gross oversimplification of what actually happened. The roots of the problem lay in the way the electoral process was conceived. Born of a popular revolt in October 1988 during which the military killed 500 Algerians in the streets in a week, a series of elections were used by the government to draw attention away from the demands of the protestors, which had mostly been about socio-economic issues. “We elected Ali Baba but not the 40 Thieves” was a popular slogan. After decades of single-party rule during which no opposition parties could operate openly, the Islamic Salvation Front - whose precursors had been militating in mosques - had a huge head start. A movement that did not believe in ruling through democracy was then best poised to benefit from that moment of democratization, a terrible contradiction. It was to be “one man, one vote, one time.” In fact, under Algerian law this party should not have been legalized in the first place, as it claimed to be based on religion. To read more please follow the link <http://www.wluml.org/news/algeria-lessons-january-11-1992-remembering-cancellation-algeria%E2%80%99s-elections-wake-%E2%80%9Carab-autumn%E2%80%9D>

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