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NEWS & ARTICLES

GENDER ACTIVISM

Twin rallies held in Beirut for women's nationality rights, professors' benefits

Two separate rallies took place in Downtown Beirut, one demanding Lebanese women be granted the right to pass their nationality to their husbands and children, and the other calling for full-time contracts to be given to deserving Lebanese University professors.

A sit-in of about 80 people took place in Riad Solh Square to protest the current Lebanese nationality law.

The group, named Jinsiyyati (My Nationality), took aim at the committee assembled by Parliament to discuss amending the standing law.

The current committee has repeatedly stated that it is working toward



promulgating a law that would allow Lebanese women to pass on their nationality to their children, so long as their husbands are not Palestinian. The campaigners took issue with such a tack and called on the committee to reconsider the principles of the law, asking that Lebanese women be allowed to pass on their nationality not only to their children but to their husbands as well, with “no exceptions.” Lama Naja, Jinsiyyati’s coordinator, told The Daily Star that if husbands of Lebanese women are not granted Lebanese nationality, some might be forced to abandon their children. With “no social security, no medical assistance and no insurance” in Lebanon, such men might well move elsewhere, she claimed.

Khaldoun Sharif, an adviser to Prime Minister Najib Mikati, said that the current situation is “unbelievable and unacceptable” but spoke of support for change among certain politicians, including the prime minister. “[Mikati] supports [the campaign] 100 percent. This campaign is right,” he insisted. Another man in the crowd was Thomas Hornig, an American saxophonist who has lived in Lebanon since 1994. “I fell in love with a Lebanese woman at university in Paris,” Hornig said. “After university she wanted to go back to her country.”

Hornig was hired as a musician at the National Conservatory and has since been a Professor of Saxophone in addition to performing with the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra.

“I work or play or teach almost 24 hours a day and I still can’t make ends meet. I’ve paid my own residency and insurance for 14 years,” he complained. Hornig argued that he’s done his part for his newly adopted country and deserves citizenship. “When the Israelis left in 2000, I performed with Julia Boutros, and in 2006 I was in Kuwait with Charbel Rouhana at a benefit for victims of the war [with Israel].” With so many people in the country unable to claim Lebanese nationality because they were born to Lebanese mothers and foreign fathers, Hornig feels Lebanon faces an increasing “brain drain.” To read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Apr-04/169156-twin-rallies-held-in-beirut-for-womens-nationality-rights-professors-benefits.ashx#ixzz1sZB1juRU>

Protest in Beirut in solidarity with Bahrain uprising, Khawaja

Around 100 men and women protested in Downtown Beirut in support of the “uprising in Bahrain” and for the release of imprisoned Bahraini activist Abdul-Hadi al-Khawaja who has been on hunger strike for 64 days. A line of women in black held large signs with Khawaja’s picture as members of the Lebanese Army and riot police surrounded the protesters at Riad Solh square in the capital. Bahraini activists and religious figures flew in to Lebanon to help organize the demonstration in collaboration with the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, which was founded by Khawaja.

“Bahraini people complain of the weak coverage from Arab media of their case, which is based on oppressed people who have been ruled by a backward family for decades and now they have reached the tipping point,” Sheikh Jaafar al-Alawi, a leading figure in a Muslim movement in Bahrain, told The Daily Star.

He added that the problem with the uprising against the government in Manama was being misrepresented as a sectarian, Shiite-led movement.

He stressed that the movement was a purely secular and national one.

“We are grateful for the Lebanese people who embrace Arab opposition members and particularly the Bahraini ones,” he added. In February of last year, protests by Bahrainis calling for reform were crushed by the government. Bahrain accused Iran of fueling the protests. Tehran denied the allegations. Recent weeks have seen a renewal of large-scale protests. Last month, thousands of Bahrainis demonstrated near Manama to demand democratic reform. Describing Lebanon as an oasis of freedom in the “Arabian desert,” Alawi expressed hope that the Lebanese would stand against oppressors everywhere and that Lebanon remains a place where people can express their views freely. To read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Apr-13/170164-protest-in-beirut-in-solidarity-with-bahrain-uprising-khawaja.ashx#ixzz1sYruRA15>



Female raiders break down barriers in Afghanistan

Crouching behind a wooden barrier, 27-year-old Sergeant Sara Delawar fires her M-4 rifle at a target showing the silhouette of a man, part of a training exercise for Afghan Special Forces.

Anxious to defuse tensions stoked by foreign male soldiers raiding Afghans’ homes at night in what is a conservative Muslim country, Afghanistan has begun training Elite female troops to join Afghan male soldiers on operations.

“Before we joined this unit, our operations were done by foreign troops and they did not know our culture. People were critical so we joined to help out,” Delawar, a former policewoman in Jowzjan province,



said.

“I have already fought the Taliban. My comrades were martyred in fights with the Taliban and we have killed them too, but during the night raids I haven’t fought insurgents yet.” Fluent in four local languages, Delawar is one of only 12 female soldiers who have been trained to fight and conduct searches in what is an attempt to pay greater respect to cultural sensitivities.

Surprise night raids in pursuit of militants have long stoked anti-Western sentiment, with many locals seeing them as assaults on their privacy and on women’s privacy in particular. In conservative southern areas of the country where the Taliban is strong, such raids have created more ill will.

Sunday, after months of tense negotiations, Afghanistan and the U.S. agreed that only Afghan forces would search residential homes or compounds.

As well as seeking to assuage cultural sensitivities, the new strategy is aimed at lowering civilian casualties and shoring up President Hamid Karzai’s popularity at a time when foreign combat troops are handing over to Afghan forces.

“It’s unacceptable for us to see male soldiers body-searching females. Men are not allowed to touch females,” third-lieutenant Binazir, 24, said.

“I’m proud to say that I’m here to serve my country side by side with my brothers. I’m proud that Afghan girls are here and I hope more girls join in order to provide better services for brothers and sisters in the battlefield and save lives.”

At a training facility on the outskirts of Kabul, the Afghan capital, suspected militants inside a mock-up house are advised to leave the building via loudspeaker. A hijab-wearing woman cries and asks where the soldiers are taking her brother. Female soldiers lead her by the arm away from the scene. To read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2012/Apr-13/170130-female-raiders-break-down-barriers-in-afghanistan.ashx#ixzz1sZDS7P00>

Syrian president’s wife urged to stop violence

The wives of the British and German ambassadors to the United Nations released a video urging the wife of Syrian President Bashar Assad to stop being a bystander and speak out to demand that her husband stop the violence now.

The video asks viewers to sign an online petition to Asma Assad asking that she take a risk and “stand up for peace ... for the sake of your people.”

Huberta von Voss-Wittig, wife of Germany’s U.N. Ambassador Peter Wittig, and Sheila Lyall Grant, said in a letter accompanying the video that as a woman, wife, mother, champion of women’s equality, and formerly vocal female Arab leader, “she cannot hide behind her husband.”

“Her public voice is needed,” they said, noting that many female victims of the ongoing violence have taken the risk to speak out and stand up for their freedom.

“We are asking Asma Assad to take a risk, too, and to say openly: Stop the bloodshed, stop it right now,” Voss-Wittig and Lyall Grant said.

The video alternates pictures of the stylish 36-year-old British-born Asma with scenes of Syria’s conflict and its victims, including graphic pictures of children who have been killed or



injured in the more than year-long conflict in which more than 9,000 people have died according to the United Nations.

Before the Syrian uprising began in March 2011, the Assads often were spotted driving and riding bicycles in Damascus with their three children. They live in an apartment in an upscale district of the capital, as opposed to a palatial mansion like other Arab leaders.

Asma played a key role in shoring up the image of the authoritarian regime, which the Assad family has controlled for four decades.

She was the subject of flattering profiles in Vogue and other fashion magazines. In 2009, Britain's top-selling tabloid The Sun introduced its readers to the "sexy Brit" who was "bringing Syria in from the cold." To read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Apr-17/170511-syrian-presidents-wife-urged-to-stop-violence.ashx#ixzz1sa8ftw6A>

Shining a light on the women in Baabda prison

In some ways, it's like any dress rehearsal. The actors are nervous, and there are a few false entrances and prop malfunctions. The director shouts "louder!" and gives a few line prompts. But these actors are not from any company or professional troupe, and you need special clearance to be in the audience as Baabda prison's female inmates tell stories of violence, patriarchy, family and, ultimately, responsibility. Welcome to the castle of Baabda, many a woman's worst nightmare, as told by the women living it. "Scheherazade in Baabda" by



Zeina Daccache, founder of Catharsis: Lebanese Center for Drama Therapy, will open in Baabda prison Thursday for 12 performances. The project - funded by the Swiss-based Drosos Foundation - is the next step for the director of "12 Angry Lebanese," the groundbreaking drama therapy project produced in Roumieh prison in 2009. "Theater can exist anywhere," says Daccache, who started out as an actress and became involved with drama therapy in 2001 in drug rehabilitation centers. But Baabda prison is not just "anywhere" and Daccache takes full advantage of the setting, playing on the fears the audience has about the unknown housed inside. Built originally to accommodate 30 inmates, Baabda prison now holds around 60 to 70 women at any time in cramped quarters. Some are imprisoned for murder, many for drug-related crimes and robbery, and many still await sentencing. After entering through the barbed gates, the play opens on the stairwell leading to the promenade where the stage is set up. The actors stand staggered on the steps, blocking the audience's way, holding the onlookers with their gaze. You can't be sure whether the stare is menacing, challenging or simply curious - a result of not seeing people from "outside" in a long time. Hesitant audience members are rescued by one of the actors, calling out "Ahlan wa sahan fikon bi Baabda," cackling as she takes your hand and leads you to your seat. The seats swivel in the small space that has been converted into a stage with a raised platform along three of the walls from which the actors pace, dance, sing and stare down at their audience. In the opening scene, each one takes turns in the spotlight, singling out an audience member as they speak - "makeup is forbidden," "no mobile phones are allowed." The tone softens as one says she misses her father, another her children. The last woman asks "What will you think of us after the play?" The play is a chance for the

women involved to share their stories and stand up to the judgment they once feared from society, Daccache explains.

Unlike Daccache's work with Roumieh inmates staging a version of the well-known play "12 Angry Men," she wrote the script for "Scheherazade in Baabda" using real stories that the women shared during drama therapy sessions since July 2011. Comprised mostly of monologues, the actors recount their own pasts while other scenes are an amalgamation of many women's stories, some of whom participated in the therapy but declined to be a part of the play. As such, we have no way of knowing who is telling their own story, highlighting the common experiences that led the women to Baabda. To know more about the therapy, please follow the link <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Apr-17/170420-shining-a-light-on-the-women-in-baabda-prison.ashx#ixzz1sa9RBEpg>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Lebanon's ways are sponsoring suicide

The suicide on March 14 of 33-year-old Alem Dechassa, an Ethiopian domestic worker and mother of two children who had arrived in Lebanon only three months earlier, provoked public outrage - both in Lebanon and abroad. There were also vigils for Dechassa around the world following the widespread dissemination of a video on the Internet of her abuse and humiliation at the hands of Ali Mahfouz, the Lebanese agent who had brought her. He has



since been charged with contributing to her death, but we will never know the full story of her experiences during the three months she was in the country.

One can only hope that this case has spurred into action the police, as well as the Labor Ministry, the Interior Ministry, the Justice Ministry and General Security. But that remains to be seen.

Dechassa's death was one of scores of similar incidents that have occurred over the years. These have been poorly investigated by the Lebanese authorities, and were documented by Human Rights Watch four years ago. Embassies of countries representing migrant domestic workers have been powerless to intervene. The latest reported abuse is that of a Bengali domestic worker who was raped six weeks ago by a policeman guarding her at the Nabatieh courthouse. She was "caught" and imprisoned after she had "escaped" from an abusive employer.

Some have suggested that a separate law be passed to address migrant domestic workers. Others have proposed that they be integrated under Lebanon's labor law. Whatever the solution, there needs to be a cultural change in the treatment of foreign women who are frequently the domestic backbone of the Lebanese family - and the economy.

With approximately 200,000 migrant domestic workers in the country, around 25 percent of Lebanese households have a live-in migrant domestic worker. Without their work doing the household chores, cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing and caring for children, how would Lebanese couples, of almost all social strata, cope with their jobs, families and social lives, let alone their marriages?

Perhaps that is the problem. Positive change is difficult because many Lebanese are afraid of losing the strict control over having these household tasks that are performed for them, and so cheaply. There is a huge dependency in play here, and the provision of these services is critical for the quality of Lebanese daily life. Both personal and family status is enhanced by being able to have a servant do whatever menial task is desired - day and night. The practical and symbolic status enhancement of Lebanese families too often comes alongside the degradation of the foreign workers in their households. To read the entire article please follow the link <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Commentary/2012/Apr-10/169709-lebanons-ways-are-sponsoring-suicide.ashx#ixzz1sZKKPqJr>

'Imam tells rape victims they deserved to be honoured' in Syria

Women Under Siege, a Women's Media Center project that documents rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war, launched a crowd-sourced initiative today to map instances of rape in Syria.

As the project gathered reports, director Lauren Wolfe said, it found something striking. "Generally women are shunned when they are raped in war. They sometimes are not allowed to go home, and whole families can be dishonored," she said. "But what's really interesting is that we have a report that an imam called for Syrian women who

were raped to be honored, for people to embrace them. He said they're raped and so they are heroes." To read the articles please follow the link <http://www.wluml.org/news/syria-imam-tells-rape-victims-they-deserved-be-honoured>



Saudi Arabia - Male Guardians - Women's Restrictions - Case Example

Women in Saudi Arabia continue to face restrictions. Or so that's what most of the liberal intellectuals and social activists believe. And they are quick to point out a few examples among many that substantiate their claims. Take the case of Dr Samia Al Amoudi, an obstetrician and gynaecologist by trade who found herself diagnosed with breast cancer six years ago. The ordeal with her affliction shook her to the core, but it also strengthened her resolve to meet her illness



head-on. In her own words, she describes the moment she was diagnosed as "a date that has a special place in my heart and the hearts of my children, family and my loved ones."

"Being a doctor, the moment I felt a lump, my medical instincts sharpened. I began to feel the lump and checked the tumour and the lymph nodes under my arm. The disease did not only make me a stronger woman, it also made me more capable of dealing with life's crises. It added to my faith and made me see my life differently," she said. But she did not choose to suffer in silence. She informed her family about her condition and then turned to the requisite chemotherapy radiation for treatment. After beating the disease, she took the path of spreading awareness and received many global awards for bringing the issue of breast cancer to the forefront among Arab women. As a single mother of two, she was the first Saudi to share her private conflict with cancer with women in the region by bringing her ordeal and its impact out on the public stage. In 2007, Condoleezza Rice the US secretary of state, recognised her achievements during an award – the first International Women of Courage Award – that was presented to honour her breast cancer awareness campaign across Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. In 2010, she was chosen among the top 100 in the region who had made changes in their societies. Samia also has written more than a dozen books and has received international honours from governments and international institutions. After having successfully fought her personal battle so courageously and helped thousands of other women seek early detection and care, Samia admits that she remains defeated in one aspect of her personal life. And that is the restriction placed on her mobility by the issue of male guardianship which dictates that she, like all other Saudi women, requires the permission of a male to travel abroad. It is not enough that driving is not permitted for women and often leaves women at the mercy of some very inexperienced hands at the wheel, but to be subjected to asking for permission to travel to attend conferences or lectures in her field is something that does not sit well with a woman who not only overcame a personal battle with a deadly disease, but along the way helped over 50,000 other women deal with it. To continue reading the article, please follow the link <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/binding-women-to-restrictions-1.1011586>

Middle East and North Africa: 'Why Do They Hate Us?'

In "Distant View of a Minaret," the late and much-neglected Egyptian writer Alifa Rifaat

begins her short story with a woman so unmoved by sex with her husband that as he focuses solely on his pleasure, she notices a spider web she must sweep off the ceiling and has time to ruminate on her husband's repeated refusal to prolong intercourse until she too climaxes, "as though purposely to deprive her." Just as her husband denies her an orgasm, the call to prayer interrupts his, and the man leaves. After washing up, she loses herself in prayer -- so

much more satisfying that she can't wait until the next prayer -- and looks out onto the street from her balcony. She interrupts her reverie to make coffee dutifully for her husband to drink after his nap. Taking it to their bedroom to pour it in front of him as he prefers, she notices he is dead. She instructs their son to go and get a doctor. "She returned to the living room and poured out the coffee for herself. She was surprised at how calm she was," Rifaat writes.



In a crisp three-and-a-half pages, Rifaat lays out a trifecta of sex, death, and religion, a bulldozer that crushes denial and defensiveness to get at the pulsating heart of misogyny in the Middle East. There is no sugarcoating it. They don't hate us because of our freedoms, as the tired, post-9/11 American cliché had it. We have no freedoms because they hate us, as this Arab woman so powerfully says.

Yes: They hate us. It must be said.

Some may ask why I'm bringing this up now, at a time when the region has risen up, fueled not by the usual hatred of America and Israel but by a common demand for freedom. After all, shouldn't everyone get basic rights first, before women demand special treatment? And what does gender, or for that matter, sex, have to do with the Arab Spring? But I'm not talking about sex hidden away in dark corners and closed bedrooms. An entire political and economic system -- one that treats half of humanity like animals -- must be destroyed along with the other more obvious tyrannies choking off the region from its future. Until the rage shifts from the oppressors in our presidential palaces to the oppressors on our streets and in our homes, our revolution has not even begun. To read the entire article, please follow the link <http://www.wluml.org/news/middle-east-and-north-africa-why-do-they-hate-us>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Saudi rules out sending women athletes to London

The head of the Saudi Olympic Committee has ruled out sending women athletes from the ultra-conservative kingdom to the London Olympics this summer, local dailies reported.

Prince Nawaf bin Faisal said, however, that Saudi women taking part on their own are free to do so and the kingdom's Olympic authority would "only help in ensuring that their participation does not violate the Islamic sharia law."

"We are not endorsing any Saudi female participation at the moment in the Olympics or other international championships," he told a press conference in Jeddah on Wednesday.

The Saudi official was reiterating a position he announced late last year, confirming that Saudi Arabia will be fielding only male athletes in London.



"There are hundreds, if not thousands, of (Saudi) women who practice sports, but in private," he said, adding that the sports body has nothing to do with their activities.

Equestrian jumping contestant Dalma Malhas, 18, is likely to be Saudi Arabia's only female athlete at this summer's Olympics, according to media reports. Malhas won a bronze medal at the 2010 Singapore Youth Olympics without having been nominated by her country, following an invitation from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The New York-based Human Rights Watch in February published a report damning the systematic exclusion of women from sporting activities in Saudi Arabia. In July last year, the president of the IOC's Women and Sport Committee, Anita DeFrantz, criticised Saudi Arabia, as well as Qatar and Brunei, for being the last three countries to have never sent female athletes to the Olympics. Qatar, which is bidding for the right to host the 2020 Olympics, has already

announced its firm intention to send female competitors to London. To read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Apr-05/169335-saudi-rules-out-sending-women-athletes-to-london.ashx#ixzz1sZCp13Xu>

Arab nudes challenge stereotypes, taboos in Paris show

The naked body in Arab art is the theme of a new Paris exhibit meant to broaden views of Arab culture, spotlighting the many artists willing to break taboos and depict nudity in all its forms.

“The Body Uncovered” at Paris’ Arab World Institute aims to “challenge the stereotypes usually associated with the Arab world that reduce it to the single image of religious fanaticism,” said the institute’s chairman Renaud Muselier.

“It is intended instead to echo the reality of an Arab art scene that despite the conservative climate, exists, dares to overcome taboos and manages to find a place in the global contemporary art scene,” he explains.



Until July 15 the institute bordering the River Seine will display 200 works by 70 modern and contemporary Arab artists, many of them women, which address eroticism, the sensuality of dance, violence, the exploitation of women and homosexuality through sculpture, collage, painting, photography and video. The collection is so dense and varied that it came as a surprise to the exhibit curators. “We didn’t expect to find an iconography so rich and diverse - we were surprised that so many Arab artists address this question,” the show’s co-curator Philippe Cardinal told AFP. “When there are social taboos, the role of artists is to unravel them at the seams: They are the first to rebel against censorship.” Many of the artists, though born in Arab countries or of Arab descent, now work out of the United States or Europe, like Huguette Caland, a Lebanese transplant to California whose oil painting was chosen for the show brochure.

Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Culture/Art/2012/Apr-12/169941-arab-nudes-challenge-stereotypes-taboos-in-paris-show.ashx#ixzz1sZFI3mmj>

Turkey Kurdish Women: Resilience In The Face Of Double Discrimination

Kurds living in Turkey mainly inhabit the East and South-East of Turkey. They are the largest ethnic minority in the country and since the establishment of modern Turkey they have been marginalized and oppressed.

The Kurdish ethnic group historically inhabited Kurdistan, an area now divided between the modern states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Kurds form about 20% of Turkey’s population. Since the formation of the state of Turkey, Kurds in Turkey have faced marginalization and suppression of their cultural identity and a very severe assimilation policy. In 1984 the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) launched an armed uprising against the Turkish state demanding an independent Kurdish homeland. Thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced in the conflict that followed. From time to time, there has been a lull in the fighting, but to date there has been no final resolution to the conflict. [\[i\]](#)

AWID asked two Kurdish women about the unique challenges that Kurdish women face in securing equality rights as part of a marginalized group. Dr. Handan Çağlayan^[ii] is an independent researcher and writer while Nurcan Baysal^[iii] is an activist working on rural development.

Turkish women face several barriers to full equality but the situation of Kurdish women is exacerbated by prejudice against their ethnic and linguistic identity. Çağlayan attributes the discrimination that Turkish women face to patriarchy in private and public spaces. Women have heavier workloads at home and this is a barrier to their participation in work outside the home. They are also marginalized socially and politically. “Capitalism benefits from patriarchal control over women,”

says Çağlayan. “Women are marginalized in the production process, and their employment is increasingly informalized.” She adds that for Kurdish women, armed conflict, village evacuations and forced migration further impoverish women and expose them to human rights violations. To read the full article please connect via this link http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/04_12/04_16/041612_turkey.htm



From brave women in Pakistan comes good news

And this news is having global resonance. Pakistani women are fighting for more than just the empowerment of women. They are taking center stage in Pakistan’s fight against oppression, social tyranny and extremism. They are the emblems of change, and Shad Begum is one such woman.

Photographs of Shad Begum standing alongside the first lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, and the U.S. secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, her face resplendent with satisfaction, is a piece of much-needed good news coming out of Pakistan. Shad is a recipient of the 2012 International Women of Courage Award, which is presented annually by the U.S. State Department to women around the world who demonstrate leadership, courage and a willingness to sacrifice for others.



Shad Begum hails from Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where the social system is strongly patriarchal and tribal sensibilities reign. Unlike women in other provinces, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa they are not even allowed to work in the fields. On the occasion of the 2012 International Women of Courage Awards, the State Department described Shad as “a courageous human rights activist and leader who has changed the political context for women in the extremely conservative district of Dir.”

The Association for Women’s Welfare (which later changed its name to the Association for Behavior and Knowledge Transformation, or ABKT), set up by Shad in 1994, took up

pioneering welfare work for women in the Dir district. Initially, ABKT focused on welfare, but increasing support from civil society and donors helped it focus on development and empowering individuals rather than only providing charity. To read the entire article please follow the link <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Commentary/2012/Apr-17/170452-from-brave-women-in-pakistan-comes-good-news.ashx#ixzz1sZQYqKE1>

Internally Displaced Women Graduate in Yemen

Islamic Relief Yemen (IRY) held, today, March 31, 2012, the graduation ceremony, under the Integrated Emergency Response Project-Phase II (IERP2) project where 180 female IDPs have completed income generation vocational training covering sewing/embroidery, beautification/hairdressing and incense making. The ceremony was held this morning at Aisha School in Sanaa' located near MOPIC/Interpol Office. IERP2 is a British government (DFID) funded initiative targeting conflict affected and vulnerable populations in various parts of the country where Phase II has largely focused on northern governorates of Saa'dah, Amran and Sana'a. Phase III which is currently being finalized between consortium members CARE Int'l (Consortium managing INGO) and DFID, largely focuses on several additional governorates with a focus on the crisis-level malnutrition situation in Hodediah. The event was attended by IRY Country



Director, Hashem Awnallah, Solaiman Altabrizi, Manger of the International Organizations Dept. at the Ministry of Human Rights; Mr. Ali Ghiath of the Althwareh District Education Office, Ms. Taghreed Al-Iryani, head of the Ministry of Vocational Training's Girls Education Dept. Ms. Sabah Almatary, head of IRY's implementing partner organization, Attah Alkhair Society. Local media representatives also attended the ceremony. After the ceremony and prior to passing out successful training certificates to the trainees, above named officials and organizational representatives then moved to a nearby hall and inspected the products produced by the female IDPs, where everyone was impressed at the quality of the goods displayed. It was also agreed that a special exhibition showcasing these products is to be planned and implemented in the next couple of weeks where consortium members, DFID representative(s), the media and other stakeholders will be invited to see and document this consortium 'success story'. To read the entire article please follow the link http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/04_12/04_02/040212_yemen.htm

Miss Universe beauty pageant allows transgender women to participate

Transgender women will be allowed to participate in the Miss Universe beauty pageant next year, officials announced a week after they ruled a trailblazing 23-year-old could vie for the crown this year.

Pageant officials said they are working on the language of the official rule policy change but expected final word to come soon. Trials for next year's Miss Universe pageant begin this summer.

The move comes five days after the organization said that Jenna Talackova could compete in the Miss Universe pageant this year. Talackova, a Vancouver resident, underwent a sex change four years ago after being born a male. The advocacy group GLAAD called on the Miss Universe Organization to review her case, as well as open the competition to transgender women.

“We want to give credit where credit is due, and the decision to include transgender women in our beauty competitions is a result of our ongoing discussions with GLAAD,” said Paula Shugart, president of the Miss Universe Organization. “We have a long history of supporting equality for all women, and this was something we took very seriously.”

Contest officials have been working closely with GLAAD to change the policy, and the advocacy group on Tuesday praised the decision and the work by Talackova to remain a contestant. “The Miss Universe Organization today follows institutions that have taken a stand against discrimination of transgender



women including the Olympics, NCAA, the Girl Scouts of America and The CW’s America’s Next Top Model,” said GLAAD’s senior director of programs Herndon Graddick. “At a time when transgender people are still routinely denied equal opportunities in housing, employment and medical care, today’s decision is in line with the growing levels of public support for transgender people across the country.”

Talackova’s sex change initially led organizers in Canada to disqualify her from the 61st Miss Universe Canada pageant in May, citing a rule that she must be “naturally born” a woman. Talackova pleaded with the pageant’s leaders to drop the rule.

“I am a woman,” Talackova said last week. “I was devastated, and I felt that excluding me for the reason that they gave was unjust. I have never asked for any special consideration. I only wanted to compete.” Donald Trump, who runs the Miss Universe Organization, wished her the best of luck. Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Culture/Lifestyle/2012/Apr-12/169945-miss-universe-beauty-pageant-allows-transgender-women-to-participate.ashx#ixzz1sZEVE3Kd>

CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

Draft law to allow mothers to pass nationality to children: First Lady

First Lady Wafaa Sleiman and the National Committee for Women’s Affairs announced that they have completed draft legislation to amend the nationality law to allow Lebanese women married to foreigners to pass their citizenship to their children.

The committee announced it would submit the draft law to the relevant authorities during a Thursday meeting, the National News Agency reported.

According to the committee, the draft law states that Lebanese women have the right to pass their nationality to their children, but



takes into account a constitutional ban on the permanent settlement of Palestinians. The draft law suggests granting the children of Lebanese women married to Palestinian men a “green card,” which would allow them to all rights except for political rights and the right to property ownership.

Under the terms of the draft law, one year after the legislation is endorsed, the children of Lebanese mothers and Palestinian fathers over the age of 18 will have one year to request Lebanese nationality from the judiciary, if they meet certain conditions, including a period of 10 years residing in the country. The groups said the draft law is based on article seven of the Constitution, which states “all Lebanese are equal before the law and enjoy equal civil and political rights and have equal duties.” Lebanese women married to foreigners cannot currently pass their nationality on to their children, an issue activists have been campaigning to change for years. Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2012/Apr-06/169416-draft-law-to-allow-mothers-to-pass-nationality-to-children-first-lady.ashx#ixzz1sYsp8EWa>

RESOURCES & CALLS

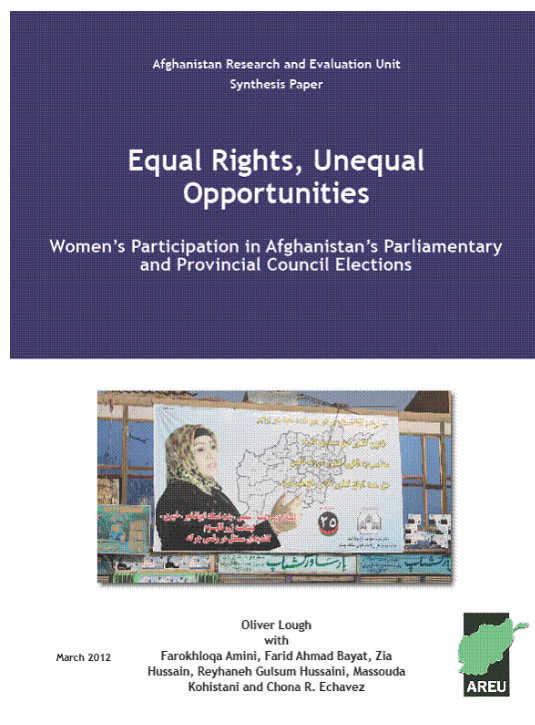
BOOKS and REPORTS

Women's Participation Afghan Elections

The establishment of a democratic system under Afghanistan's 2004 constitution has without doubt led to an unprecedented expansion of political participation for its women. In the years that have followed, millions of women have turned out to vote in successive rounds of presidential, legislative and provincial elections. Thousands more have competed for positions in parliament and the provincial councils. A new AREU paper explores some of the dynamics of women's participation as candidates and voters in these elections, drawing on conversations with successful and unsuccessful female candidates, along with men and women in six study communities spread across Balkh, Bamiyan and Kabul provinces. It finds that there is no one blueprint for a successful female candidacy, and the stories of individuals interviewed for this study were as diverse and complex as the various political environments in which they operated. In almost all cases, successful candidates ultimately secured victory via a combination of good

access to financial resources, ties to a powerful family or a political party, and—often most importantly—a strong relationship with a given community or other constituency of voters. Significantly, surprisingly few female candidates chose to court female voters.

Women voters in the research communities generally had reasonably unhindered access to the ballot box, and understood how to cast their votes. However, their voices were shut out of the community-level discussions so vital to electoral politics in contemporary Afghanistan. Although they were rarely forced to vote for a given candidate, the refusal of their husbands to talk politics with women in their households left many of them struggling to make informed choices. Nonetheless, taking part in elections had a deeply positive



personal impact on many of the women in this study, providing a vital affirmation of their equal rights in the eyes of the state, boosting their self-confidence and raising hopes for changing the existing status quo. For more information about the research please follow the link http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/04_12/04_09/040912_afghanistan.htm

Journal of Middle East Women's Studies

The Journal of Middle East Women's Studies has launched its new Volume 8, Number 2 (Spring 2012), with essays and book reviews about the Middle East; the links of the essays and book reviews are:

ESSAYS

- [Thinking Intentionality: Arab Women's Subjectivity and its Discontents](#), [Suad Joseph](#), p. 1-25
- [Saving Egypt's Village Girls: Humanity, Rights, and Gendered Vulnerability in a Global Youth Initiative](#), [Rania Kassab Sweis](#), p. 26-50
- [Daughters of the Right Path: Family Law, Homosocial Publics, and the Ethics of Intimacy in the Works of Shi'i Revivalist Bint Al-Huda](#), [Sara Pursley](#), p. 51-77
- [Palestinian Working Women in Israel: National Oppression and Social Restraints](#), [Suheir Abu Oksa Daoud](#), p. 78-101

BOOK REVIEWS

- [Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam](#), Reviewed by: Nadia Maria El Cheikh, American University of Beirut, p. 102-104
- [Women, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia](#), Reviewed by: Shayna Silverstein, University of Chicago, p. 105-107
- [Militant Women of a Fragile Nation](#), Reviewed by: Nadya Sbaiti, Smith College, p. 108-110
- [Umm Kulthum: Artistic Agency and the Shaping of an Arab Legend, 1967-2007](#), Reviewed by: Alyson E. Jones, University of Michigan, p. 110-113
- [Gender and Identity in North Africa: Postcolonialism and Feminism in Maghrebi Women's Literature](#), Reviewed by: Edwige Tamalet Talbayev, Yale University, p. 113-116
- [A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America](#), Reviewed by: Joan Wallach Scott, Institute for Advanced Study, p. 116-119
- [Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870-1940](#), Reviewed by: Nadia Guessous, New York University, p. 119-122

To read the volume, please follow the link <http://www.jmews.org/journal-issue/volume-8-number-2/>

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