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NEWS & ARTICLES

GENDER ACTIVISM

Launch of Syrian Women's Forum for Peace

In a first of its kind initiative, more than forty Syrian women from all walks of social and political life, convened a working seminar in Cairo to form the “Syrian Women’s Forum for Peace” between October 30 and November 1 2012. The working seminar was an opportunity to forge a united vision and shared efforts to create a role for Syrian women in all spheres of public affairs - especially those relating to fighting the violence spreading through the country, and to elevate peace as a universal value for all Syrians. The three-day conference included discussions of the risks associated with Syria falling into a cycle of violence. Participants made presentations on the various human rights violations, specifically those faced by women as a result of the violence, internally displaced women, and refugees in neighboring countries. Through these discussions, participants reaffirmed the importance of involving women in peace building to bring an end to violence. The working seminar concluded with the formal launch of the “Syrian Women’s Forum for Peace”, which aims to activate Syrian and international public opinion to lobby decision makers to adopt peaceful means in political life and to build a democratic state. The Forum also aims to create a culture of peace for all Syrians, especially since peace is one of the fundamental characteristics of Syrian culture. In addition to empowering local Syrian communities to take active roles in the peaceful political process, and emphasize civil peace in cooperation with and collaboration with Syrian and international groups who are committed to a peaceful and democratic political process. This initiative also aims at ensuring that women are able to actively participate in peacemaking processes, building democracy, fully participate in public life, and work towards a unified vision for peace. It also builds on the solidarity of like-minded male activists, who pledged to work together with the Forum.

The working seminar issued a strategic action plan to achieve the Forum’s goals through the creation of five specialist working groups:

1. Networking with organizations and groups committed to the goal of peace inside and outside the country,
2. Building avenues of communication with Syrian civil society at the individual and organizational levels,



3. Capacity building and formation of cadres necessary to undertake this campaign,
 4. Empowering civil society towards undertaking active roles and peace building, and
 5. Addressing the immediate and urgent needs of people caught up in the conflict.
- These five groups have been tasked with preparing initiatives to bring the Forum's goals to fruition on the ground.

The conference is a reflection of the will of Syrian women to work towards building a democratic and civil Syrian state, with just institutions and through peaceful means - an expression of the desire of Syrian women to assume their rightful roles in the country and to stop needless bloodshed.

For more information or to schedule an interview please email will@el-karama.org or Zahra@el-karama.org or visit the website <http://www.el-karama.org/content/launch-syrian-women-making-peace-forum>

New Somali Female Foreign Minister Fowsiyo Yusuf Haji Adan

For the first time in Somali history, a woman has been appointed foreign minister, the country's Prime Minister Abdi Fareh Shirdon Saeid said on Sunday as he announced his new cabinet.

Fowsiyo Yusuf Haji Adan is to become the government's foreign official.

"After long talks and negotiations, I have formed a government of 10 ministers, one of whom is a woman who will be Somalia's first female



foreign minister," Saeid said upon announcing the names of his newly-appointed ministers. Adan originally hails from Somaliland, a self-declared, yet internationally unrecognized, independent region in the north, and lived for a long time in Britain.

Upon her appointment, Adan noted that choosing a woman to be the foreign minister is a historic precedent that is bound to change the political scene in Somalia.

"This is a triumph for Somalia and Somali women. It heralds a new page in politics," she said.

Adan, however, is not the only woman in the cabinet. Mariam Qassim Ahmed will be given the development and social affairs ministry.

Rights activist Amena Abdul Qader referred to Adan's appointment as a political victory for Somali women.

"Men failed in previous governments and we have high hopes for this one," she told Al Arabiya. "We also expect more political gains for women."

Abdul Qader added that she hoped women would be at the head of more vital ministries like finance, education, health, and the interior.

"Men failed in all those important ministries before and working in them requires transparency and integrity which applies more to Somali women than their male counterparts," she added.

Abdul Qader explained that for more than 20 years, men occupied all important positions and the result was rampant corruption and the squandering of state money.

Since the collapse of the central government in Somalia in the early 1990s, Somali women were fully in charge of their families with men either unemployed or at war. To support

their families, Somali women worked in trade and other menial jobs men refused to take. The Somali parliament is to approve the new cabinet as a final step after which it is to start its official duties. More information

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/11_12/11_12/111212_somalia.htm

EgyptAir Stewardesses Begin Wearing Hijab

EgyptAir stewardesses, who campaigned to wear headscarf, have begun donning the hijab for the first time since the national carrier was founded in 1932, a company official said on Sunday. The first flight attendants dressed in the hijab, which mainstream clerics say is mandatory, worked on flights to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

Under Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, who was toppled in an uprising in early 2011, the hijab was taboo for women in some state institutions such as state television and the national carrier.

But after the election of the Islamist President Muhammad Morsi in June, women in television and EgyptAir campaigned for permission to wear the hijab, like most Muslim women in Egypt. The company had agreed to allow the stewardesses to wear the hijab after a strike by cabin crews in September that also demanded better pay.

An EgyptAir official said a foreign company has been contracted to design a cap and headscarf for the estimated 250 stewardesses who want to wear the hijab, out of 900 women working for EgyptAir.

In September, an anchorwoman was the first woman to appear on state television wearing the scarf, which traditionally covers the hair and neck. Some more liberal women wear the hijab to cover only their hair.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C11%5C12%5Cstory_12-11-2012_pg7_5



Male Guardian Must Approve Travel Abroad in Saudi Arabia

A discovery that Saudi male guardians are automatically getting text messages about cross border movements of female dependants has caused a Twitter uproar.

"Hello Taliban, herewith some tips from the Saudi e-government!" read one post, while another suggested microchips.

Attention was drawn to the system when a man travelling with his wife got an alert as they left Riyadh airport.

Saudi women are denied the right to travel without their guardian's consent and are also banned from driving.

Reform attempts

Saudi men earlier had the option of requesting alert messages about their dependants' cross-border movement, but it appears that since last week such notifications are being sent automatically.

Some Twitter users have mocked the move, suggesting also the use of microchips and ankle bracelets to track women.

Another tweet read: "If I need an SMS to let me know my wife is leaving Saudi Arabia, then I'm either married to the wrong woman or need a psychiatrist."

The text alerts are part of an electronic passport system launched by the Saudi authorities last year.

The government argues that e-passports make it easier for citizens to deal with their travel arrangements "without having to visit the passport office".

Saudi Arabia remains a deeply conservative country, however King Abdullah has recently introduced some cautious political and social reforms. In September 2011, he announced that women would be given the right to vote and run in future municipal elections. For more information

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/11_12/11_19/111912_saudi.htm



High estimated numbers of Arab women unmarried

There are an estimated 25 million women aged 24 and above in the Arab world – including the Gulf region – who remain unmarried and large numbers of them have crossed the marriageable age of 35, says a research whose findings were posted on a social networking site here yesterday.

Egypt, the country with the largest population in Arab world, alone accounts for more than one-third (nine million) of the total number of spinsters in Arab world, followed by Algeria (four million), Iraq (three million) and Yemen (two million).



Countries like Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia have 1.5 million spinsters each of marriageable age, according to the study conducted in 14 Arab countries in 2010 by 'Alrai' newspaper of Kuwait, the social networking site said. These are just rough estimates and not actual figures.

As for other countries, Syria and Lebanon have a share of 700,000 and 450,000 each in the total spinster population.

Studies conducted in Jordan show that the average marriageable age of women has risen up to 30 while the average is 32 in the case of men.

Saudi Arabia tops the GCC states in terms of the number of women aged 24 and above who are unmarried. Next is the UAE where spinsters (estimated at a staggering 700,000) account for nearly 70 percent of the overall local (citizens) female population.

Bahrain with a figure of 450,000 ranks next followed by Kuwait (70,000) and Qatar (30,000). Statistics for Oman were not available but rough estimates suggest the ratio of women in marriageable age might not be less than 10 percent of the country's female population. Kuwait has taken some steps to rectify the situation and narrow the gap with the parliament recommending that state marriage loans worth 6,000 dinars (QR60,000) be given away to those eligible.

Studies suggest that in Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and the UAE the ratio of women who remain unmarried is 35 percent of the total female population in these countries. This ratio in

Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Libya has declined to 30 percent, while in the case of Sudan and Somalia it has come down to 20 percent. In Qatar, some 30 percent of women who are aged 34 and above remain unmarried.

The research paper quotes a UAE journalist, Ayesha Reema, as telling Sharjah Radio recently that there were an estimated 4.5 million women of marriageable age in the GCC region whose marriages were being delayed. The research said given the present situation the number of spinsters in Saudi could soar to four million over the next five years. Citing reasons for delayed marriages and the rising size of the population of spinsters in the Arab world, the research said women outnumbering men, rising jobless rate, poverty and high costs of marriage were largely to blame for the social malaise.

As for the cash-rich GCC region, high rate of divorce and escalating wedding costs are blamed for the swelling numbers of unmarried women. The research calls on the governments and the charities to play an active role to help remove the imbalance.

The research has evoked reactions from citizens on local social networking sites and according to one commentator, the problem with Qatari families is that they don't allow their male or female members to marry even in other GCC states.

Another commentator said that it is not only Qatari women whose marriages are delayed but Qatari men are also facing similar woes.

Yet another commentator wrote that the divorce rate in Qatar was very high which meant that marriages were not stable. For more information follow the link http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/11_12/11_12/111212_high.htm

ABAAD dialogues with religious leaders to end Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the Middle East

Religious leaders from around the Middle East (Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq) convened to discuss ways of initiating common grounds with CSOs to end Gender Based Violence (GBV). Muslim and Christian leaders came together on November 9 and 10 in a roundtable session organized by ABAAD at the Crowne Plaza Hotel-Beirut in partnership with "Oxfam Great Britain" and the "Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue".

Discussions highlighted the different forms of GBV assessed by religious leaders within their practices and communities. Main forms of violence facing women in societies were identified as domestic violence, female genital mutilation, mal-application of Personal Status Codes (custody, Quwama, inheritance, etc...), early/forced marriages, socialization and gender discrimination against girls, honor killing, sexual harassment in public spaces, sexual spousal violence among others.

Religious leaders identified many causal factors behind the prevalence of GBV among their communities. Among these factors are the lack of education on rights for both women and men, disparity in the scientific capacities among religious leaders and misconception of religion teachings. Religious leaders have also agreed that societal systems impose traditional and patriarchal social norms in the name of religion. This, according to them, is the main challenge facing them as well as women victims of GBV.

Moreover, the roundtable highlighted how civil society and religious leaders can forge a positive partnership for the future to work together to end GBV. It was agreed on the importance of creating a regional network of religious leaders to fight GBV. More discussion and awareness sessions for religious leaders who work directly with their communities on issues related to women's rights is considered as an important step to promote women's rights.



The roundtable concluded with identifying tangible roles for religious leaders to play in ending GBV. Participating religious leaders agreed that they have preventive, supportive, therapeutic, as well as legislative roles.

This roundtable is a statement of potential partnerships between civil society and religious leaders in addressing one of the grave violations of women rights. Most importantly, it is an acknowledgement of the possibilities of reform from within institutions and the desire to work together, for women in the communities, to build a society of dignity, equality, and freedom from violence. For more information

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/11_12/11_12/111212_middle2.htm

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Sudanese Journalist and Women's Rights Defender Abused and Tortured

The Government of Sudan must immediately investigate the arbitrary detention and torture of freelance Sudanese journalist Somia Ismail Ibrahim Hendusa, who was found abandoned and in extremely poor health on a Khartoum street on 2 November following her arrest by Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) officers on 29 October.

Ms. Hendusa, a 34 year old freelance journalist, was arrested from a street in Khartoum Bahri nearby her family home at 10pm on 29 October. She was apprehended by seven NISS officers and taken to the NISS office in Khartoum Bahri. Ms. Hendusa was subjected to physical and psychological torture and reported that nine NISS officers were involved. She was forced to remove her abaya (Islamic dress), beaten with water pipes and burned on her back, shoulders and stomach with an iron.

Ms. Hendusa was also subjected to racial abuse. The NISS officers shaved her head and told her that they did so because she appeared have "Arab" hair rather than "Darfuri" hair. She was also accused of being a prostitute and told that the Rizeigat are slaves.

Four days later, on the morning of 2 November, Ms. Hendusa was released and abandoned in extremely poor health on a street in the Khour Al Sumra neighbourhood of Al Drushab district, Khartoum Bahri.



Ms. Hendusa is a freelance journalist known for publishing political analysis for two online newspapers, Sudan Today and Al Rakouba. During her detention, she was accused of advocating against the Government of Sudan and interrogated about articles she had written which were critical of Sudanese president Omar Al Bashir.

Ms. Hendusa had been living in Cairo, Egypt but was visiting family in Sudan for Eid Al-Adha at the time of her arrest. She reported that on 25 October, a few days prior to her arrest, she had received a phone call from the NISS welcoming her to Sudan. She received a second call on 27 October asking her to report to NISS offices in Khartoum Bahri, which she did not do. Ms. Hendusa also reported that a car had been following her in the days leading to her arrest.

On 2 November, the day of her release, Ms. Hendusa sought medical treatment at Omdurman Hospital. However, the hospital refused to issue her the medical report form necessary to obtain treatment. She subsequently obtained a medical report from Khartoum Bahri Hospital which confirmed that she had burns on her body and that her head had been shaved.

On the day of her release, Ms. Hendusa also attempted to lodge a criminal complaint at Al Safia Police station in Khartoum Bahri. She obtained the required approval from the prosecutor of Al Safia police station to lodge a criminal complaint, but after waiting six hours at the police station the attending officer refused to conduct an interview in the absence of a senior officer. She subsequently succeeded to file a criminal complaint the next day against nine NISS officers including a high ranking NISS officer named Babiker al Fadni and eight others whose names are not known.

ACJPS calls on the Government of Sudan to uphold its domestic and international law obligations and immediately ensure an effective, independent and impartial investigation into the allegations of arbitrary detention, torture and racist abuse.

Throughout 2012, ACJPS has documented a pattern of arbitrary arrest, torture and ill-treatment of individuals publishing material critical of the Government of Sudan, including journalists, political activists and human rights defenders. ACJPS is concerned that there has been a rise in the incidence of arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and ill-treatment of women activists in recent months. For more information follow the link

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201211080138.html>

Egypt's New Constitution Limits Fundamental Freedoms And Ignores Women's Rights

A draft constitution approved by Egypt's Constituent Assembly falls well short of protecting human rights and, in particular, ignores the rights of women, restricts freedom of expression in the name of protecting religion, and allows for the military trial of civilians, Amnesty International said today.

In the document freedom of religion is limited to Islam, Christianity and Judaism - potentially excluding the right to worship to other religious minorities such as Baha'is and Shi'a Muslims.

The constitution also fails to provide for the supremacy of international law over national law, raising concerns about Egypt's commitment to human rights treaties to which it is a state party. Furthermore, the document fails to fully guarantee economic, social and cultural rights, such as protection against forced evictions - it also tolerates child labour.

Meanwhile, Amnesty has expressed concern that the assembly - widely boycotted by opposition political parties and Christian churches - is not truly representative of Egyptian society. The body is dominated by the Freedom and Justice Party and the Nour Party.



At the outset, the assembly only included seven women and their numbers have since dwindled. Opposition political parties have withdrawn their members from the assembly, as have Christian churches, in protest at the assembly's make-up and decisions. These have voiced a number of concerns, including the lack of representation of young people, of a variety political parties, and the role of Shari'a law has played - including in respect of women's rights. The assembly also faced criticism for not doing enough to enshrine the right to adequate housing - a key concern for the estimated 12 million Egyptians living in slums. A decree issued last week by President Morsi gave the Constituent Assembly an additional two months to complete its work. However on Wednesday the body announced that it would finalise the text in a day. Yesterday, the draft was rushed through a plenary session of the assembly, with no time for real debate or objections from the members.

Amnesty International Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui said:

"Instead of marking a return to order and the rule of law, the adopted text of the constitution has plunged Egypt into even greater chaos and deadlock.

"This document, and the manner in which it has been adopted, will come as an enormous disappointment to many of the Egyptians who took to the streets to oust Hosni Mubarak and demand their rights.

"The process of drafting the constitution was flawed from the outset, and has become increasingly unrepresentative.

"We urge President Morsi to put the drafting and referendum process back on the right path, one that includes all sectors of society, which respects the rule of law - including the vital role of an independent judiciary - and results in a constitution that enshrines human rights, equality and dignity for all.

"Provisions that purport to protect rights mask new restrictions, including on criticism of religion. Women, who were barely represented in the assembly, have the most to lose from a constitution which ignores their aspirations, and blocks the path to equality between men and women. It is appalling that virtually the only references to women relate to the home and family."

When asked about the lack of women's rights in the draft constitution yesterday in a state television interview, President Morsi said women were citizens like all others. The President's position mirrors the approach of the Constituent Assembly in ignoring women's rights.

The vote to approve the constitution came ahead of a 2 December ruling on the assembly's legitimacy by the Supreme Constitutional Court, which was widely expected to order the body's dissolution. President Morsi's decree, which was announced on 22 November, prevents any judicial body from dissolving the assembly. The decree, which also removed the Public Prosecutor, granted the president sweeping powers and stopped the courts from challenging his decisions, has sparked widespread anger and protests in Egypt.

Opposition groups plan to march to the presidential palace today, while the Muslim Brotherhood has called for a protest to support the President on Saturday.

The draft constitution now passes to a national referendum which must take place within 15 days. Any such referendum would require supervision by judges but Egypt's Judges Club, an independent network of judges numbering some 9,500 members, has announced that its members will not take part. Judges throughout the country are striking in protest at President Morsi's decree, which they see as a threat to their independence.

Notes for editors:

Amnesty International has a number of concerns about the contents of the draft. They include:

*Amnesty is particularly concerned that the constitution does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender. Article 10 says that the state will work to strike a

balance between the family duties of women and their work in society. Amnesty is further concerned that Article 219, which defines the principles of Shari'a law as being the "fundamental rules of jurisprudence," may impact on the rights of women, and may be used as a justification to uphold legislation which currently discriminates against women in respect of marriage, divorce and family life. Article 2 establishes Shari'a law as the primary source of legislation.

*The constitution makes no reference to international law obligations, and does not provide for the supremacy of international law over Egyptian legislation. Though Egypt is a state party to a number of international human rights treaties, including the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the constitution does not explicitly set out Egypt's obligations under each provision of those treaties, or make them directly enforceable to all individuals under Egyptian law.

*Article 33 states that citizens "are equal in public rights and duties and they shall not be discriminated against". However, this article only protects Egyptian citizens, and not others such as refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants. Furthermore, a list of specific prohibited grounds, which included sex, religion and origin, was removed in the last draft, failing to mirror the non-exhaustive formulation contained in the international covenants.

*Article 36 prohibits torture and other ill-treatment, including the use of "confessions" extracted under torture in criminal proceedings; however, Article 219 may allow for the imposition of corporal punishments that violate the prohibition of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

*Article 198 explicitly allows for the unfair trial of civilians before military courts - a provision apparently added at the insistence of the army representative in the assembly. Under the 17-month rule of the army (February 2011-June 2012), over 12,000 civilians were tried unfairly by military courts. The end of such trials had been a key rallying cry for protesters. Amnesty opposes the trials of civilians by military courts, which are fundamentally unfair and breach a number of fair trial safeguards.

*Article 43 restricts freedom of worship to "heavenly religions", to adherents of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, and therefore leaves other religions and religious groups such as Baha'is without protection of freedom of worship. Article 3 ties personal status laws to religious law; and, as regards religious minorities, only provides for Christians and Jews the right to regulate their religious affairs and spiritual leadership. It is also unclear the extent to which religious minorities such as Shi'a and others will be protected by the provision; in the past they have faced discrimination in their right to worship in Egypt.

*Article 44 prohibits "undermining or subjecting to prejudice all messengers and prophets." Similar provisions have been used in Egyptian law to restrict freedom of expression, and under President Morsi, charges have been brought against a number of individuals for "defaming religion". Article 31 prohibits insulting and defaming any person, a provision which violates the right to freedom of expression and similarly provides for defamation to remain a criminal offence. The two provisions appear to undermine Article 45, which guarantees freedom of expression and opinion, and violate Egypt's obligation to uphold freedom of expression under Article 19 of the ICCPR.

*The constitution does little to enshrine economic, social and cultural rights, although demands for dignity and social justice featured prominently in the demands of protesters who toppled Hosni Mubarak. Amnesty is particularly concerned that Article 67, while it mentions the right to adequate housing, does not explicitly prohibit forced evictions. The organisation has long documented such evictions in informal settlements, which are illegal under international human rights law.

*The constitution has also failed to protect the rights of children. It does not define a child as any person under 18 years of age, as provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and does not protect children from early marriage. Furthermore, Article 70 permits children who are still in primary education to work, as long as the work is “adequate for their age”. The article does not ensure children are protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous, as required by the CRC. The constitutional provisions also fail to comply with other treaties on children’s rights ratified by Egypt, including the Minimum Age Convention, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. <http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Women-s-Rights-in-the-News2/Egypt-s-new-constitution-limits-fundamental-freedoms-and-ignores-women-s-rights>

South Sudan - Refugee Oumi's Story - Video

Through Oumi's words and eyes, are reflected the hardships, insecurities, poverty, losses, and realities of a displaced refugee woman in Africa who has fled with family to escape the war and fighting.

The video is available on UNHCR website <http://unhcr.org/v-508e84916>



Panic Button project for victims of domestic violence in Turkey

A recent project run by two Turkish ministries aims to combat domestic violence by providing women panic buttons, which will be integrated into a call-center system in case of emergency. The panic button will be disguised as jewelry, a phone or a watch an official says. The project will be tried in two provinces soon

A new project to combat domestic violence in Turkey will be started in two cities at the end of August.

A panic button pilot project will be implemented by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Ministry of Interior in the northwestern province of Bursa and southern province Adana as the first step.

Panic buttons will be available to women local courts order protection for, said Sevim Taşdelen, press consultant of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. “The panic button will be disguised as jewelry, a phone or a watch,” Taşdelen told the Hürriyet Daily News yesterday in a phone interview.

The ministries have concluded their work on the proposed project, which will also provide electronic monitoring bracelets for men who commit violence.



Call-center system

The panic buttons will be integrated into a call-center system in order to implement the projects more effectively.

The ministries made an agreement with the GSM Company Avea to transfer the calls from the buttons to the 155 police emergency line, she said.

Family and Social Policies Minister Fatma Şahin also said the “Alo 183” phone line, which was developed to combat domestic violence, would be restructured, and an agreement on the line had been made with Turkcell, adding that the officials working in these call centers

would receive special training according to a report published yesterday by daily Zaman. The call centers will be opened in Gaziantep, a total of 120 people will work at the center, and the contract procedures have been completed, the report said.

“The projects will be implemented particularly in provinces with strong infrastructure and high migration rates. As part of the project, testing will be conducted in Adana and Bursa just after Ramadan. We will assume all the charges and provide the necessary equipment for the project,” Şahin said.

Şahin also announced that the civil servants at these two ministries were working on the regulations for the implementation law and that it would be presented to the Council of Ministers in a few days.

Şahin also stated that such projects were implemented with great success in countries such as Britain, Germany and the U.S. She said Turkish civil servants had observed their implementation and adapted them for Turkey.

Şahin’s press adviser Taşdelen said they planned to implement the project across **Turkey** in a year. http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/11_12/11_12/111212_turkey.htm

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Women’s Political Participation in Jordan - Journal International Women’s Studies

Recent decades in Jordan have witnessed considerable changes in women’s roles in the political sphere and in the community. Jordan has passed, modified, or adopted legislation that fosters the rights of women and the abolition of discrimination against them. Women experienced real visibility in higher leadership positions with 10.8% in the lower house and 11.7% in the senate. Yet, while women earn higher levels of education, their participation in the labor market is relatively low, and those who want to join the labor force meet higher levels of unemployment. Although women have made real progress in the public sphere, their participation is still modest and needs to be fostered and enhanced. More needs to be done to educate Jordanian women on political participation, and on overcoming various obstacles that hinder their efforts towards more visible and effective roles. http://www.bridgew.edu/soas/jiws/Vol13_no5/article12.pdf



Allow Women to Pass on Jordanian Nationality to Their Children

Shireen lives in Jordan with her non-Jordanian husband and their children. Due to the country’s sex discriminatory nationality law, Shireen’s passport is stamped with the notice: “Children are not permitted to be included in the mother’s passport due to the husband’s different nationality.” She has a troubled marriage and lives in constant fear that her husband will take her children away to his home country, which he can do since their children are only registered on his passport. If he leaves the country with them, her only recourse would be to follow him and apply in his country of origin for access or custody of her children. Even then, she may have difficulty bringing them back to Jordan since they are not listed on her passport. Due to her own experiences, Shireen does not want her daughter to marry a non-national. She thinks that marrying her off at an early age to a Jordanian man would give her daughter the sense of security and protection that she herself does not have.

LAYLYA's non-national husband moved from job to job, trying to find a decent living. Work permits cost over 400 Jordanian Dinars (about US\$600) and employers often refuse to give

foreign-born men proper jobs since they can hire them unofficially for jobs with lower wages and longer hours. Anxious about his inability to provide a decent life for his family, Layla's husband suffered a heart attack. He moved back to his home country in order to regain some dignity.

Three of Layla's Jordanian-born sons are working illegally, in constant fear of the police; her 17-year old daughter cannot afford to go to university because she would be charged higher "foreigner" fees despite having been born in Jordan to a Jordanian mother. She is not eligible to apply for government scholarships. If these children had been born to a Jordanian father, they would be considered Jordanian and not have to face any of these difficulties.

While MASHA'EL has birth certificates for her four children proving they were born in Jordan to a Jordanian mother, their passports show them as nationals of a different country, which makes her feel very vulnerable and fear their possible deportation. Her husband works in the beauty salon she owns, but is still required to renew his work permit annually--something he has not done this year because of the cost.

He fears deportation if the police discover this, but the family's priority is to pay the elevated university "foreigner" fees for their eldest son so that he can get a decent education. Unable to cope with the restrictions and hardships associated with being a foreigner in his own country, their son tried to set himself on fire last year.

Layla, Masha'el and Shireen's stories illustrate just some of the hardships caused by the inability of Jordanian women to pass on their nationality. Additional restrictions, such as where children from these unions can work or study, in access to government hospitals and the need to obtain Ministry of the Interior approval to marry, are all contributing to the increased vulnerability of these women and their families.

Under Jordanian Law No.6 of 1954 on Nationality, last amended in 1987, with few exceptions, women cannot transmit their nationality to their children or upon marriage to their husbands. To combat this law which does not apply equivalently to Jordanian men and which is negatively impacting the security and livelihood of Jordanian women married to non-nationals, Nima Habashna founded the campaign "My mother is Jordanian, and her nationality is a right for me." Led by Jordanian women married to non-Jordanians and with the support of the Arab Women Organization, Nima is leading a series of sit-ins in front of the Ministry of the Interior and other government offices calling on the government to amend the nationality law in line with Jordan's international legal obligations.

Though Jordanian law allows for the possibility of naturalization of a non-national husband and their children, it is at the discretion of the Council of Ministers and applications must be obtained and filed in person with the Ministry of the Interior based in the capital. Nima, for example, submitted an application as soon as she was able several years ago. However, despite repeated attempts to obtain a decision, and even with the assistance of a Parliamentarian who submitted papers on her behalf, she has never directly received an official written response. Finally, on 25 April 2012, the Parliamentarian received an official letter stating that Nima's application was rejected without giving any explanation as to



why. Other women in the campaign have also tried to have their children and spouses naturalized but are unable to even obtain an application from the Ministry. The Arab Women Organization brought the issue to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in February 2012. In its concluding observations in July 2012, CEDAW urged the government “to enable Jordanian women to pass their nationality to their foreign spouses and their mutual children” within the context of nationality rights. Several other UN treaties and treaty monitoring bodies including the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, have also addressed this issue. All of these committees in their most recent review of Jordan’s implementation of their respective human rights treaties have urged Jordan to amend its nationality law . When the Ministry agrees to proceed with an application, the Council of Ministries has the authority to either approve or reject it. No woman in the campaign has even managed to have her petition considered. The women have also tried sending letters to the King of Jordan with no success. Although the Jordanian parliament has been dissolved and elections for the new parliament aren’t likely to be held until the end of 2012, a Cabinet is still operating. This Cabinet has the power to pass a temporary law amending the Nationality Law and present it to parliament for approval when it reconvenes.

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/11_12/11_05/110512_jordan.htm

PARLIAMENTARIANS have pledged to remove from the Constitution all forms of discrimination against women.

At present, Bahamian women are legally inferior to men in various ways, most prominently with regard to the right to transfer citizenship to their children. But in a resolution adopted by both the House of Assembly and the Senate, and supported by the opposition, Parliamentarians agreed to remove all forms of discrimination against women as part of a wide-ranging constitutional referendum set for June of next year.

Also during yesterday’s joint sitting, the five leaders at the helm of the women’s suffrage movement in the 1940s and 50s were honoured.

Mary Ingraham, Eugenie Lockhart, Mabel Walker, Georgiana K Symonette, and Dame Doris Johnson were praised for their contributions to women’s rights in the Bahamas, which eventually enabled 54,000 women equality among men and voting rights.

Bahamian women were allowed for the first time in history to vote on November 26, 1962. On that day, Ruby Ann Darling was the first woman to cast a ballot. She had just turned 21 years old.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of women’s suffrage, the almost one dozen women on the political frontline sitting in the Senate yesterday each recited excerpts from Dame Doris Johnson’s speech, which she was not allowed to deliver in the House in 1959, because she was not a member and the House decided not to set a precedent for a “stranger”.

She did, however, read the speech to House members when Premier Sir Roland Symonette had a court room cleared and led House members to the court to hear her speech.

In the address, which was read on January 19, 1959, Dame Doris expressed her concern that



women had not been enfranchised as had their male counterparts. She reminded them that the United Nations guaranteed a fundamental voting right regardless of race, colour, or sex. While Social Services Minister Melanie Griffin told parliamentarians that the tenacity, boldness and stamina of the woman had been for a long time deserving of national acknowledgement, she called on the women of today to work together for the further advancement of equal rights.

“My sisters,” said Mrs Griffin, “we still have many rivers to cross, we still have miles to go. Like the pioneers of the movement, we must put aside our differences and run with the baton. It is indeed our time now and we must not slack. God has provided this moment in time to give us a new awakening.

“We must not allow another term of government to pass without erasing all forms of discrimination against women in our country. This is not the time to squabble over by-gones, we must forward, upward, onward, together. It is our season now, what are we going to do about it?”

Deputy leader of the opposition Loretta Butler-Turner said the women’s movement in the country has grown by leaps and bounds.

“We are very happy that we are one accord. Moving forward to the resolution that there will be no discord because Bahamian women realise that we will finally get justice and look forward to being equal in every which way that the Bahamas can enjoy,” Mrs Butler-Turner said.

For more on women’s suffrage follow the link <http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Women-s-Rights-in-the-News2/Equality-Pledge-For-Women>

RESOURCES & CALLS

ANNOUNCEMENTS & CALLS

Making the Food System Work for Women - Registration for Online Policy Discussion



Ten Experts, Ten Essays, One Topic: Making the Food System Work for Women

Join Oxfam’s global online policy discussion from November 19-30, 2012

Oxfam will be hosting an online discussion about how to achieve food justice for women. The purpose is to reframe the discourse on food security from the perspective of women’s rights and women’s agency. Rather than critique the current state of affairs, the discussion will seek to generate bold proposals for building a collective agenda to advance gender justice within the food system.

- **What:** A policy discussion to generate bold proposals for advancing gender justice within the food system
- **Why:** To share ideas, hear those of others, and dialogue with some of the world’s best minds on how to make the food system work for women
- **When:** Two-week online discussion from November 19-30 in English, French and Spanish

- **How:** Each day we will post one essay online and invite your comments at <http://blogs.oxfam.org/grow>

This is the first in a series of online discussions to help deepen Oxfam's understanding of the issues that drive its GROW campaign.

We have invited 10 experts - academics, activists, entrepreneurs and partners - to write short essays to get the discussion started. Each essay articulates a unique vision for how to tackle the systemic and institutional power imbalances between men and women in the food system. (See full list of contributors below.)

To conclude the online discussion, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Oliver De Schutter, will provide an overall analysis of the discussion and draw out key recommendations.

Come learn about Vandana Shiva's recommendations for keeping seeds in women's hands; be challenged by private sector perspectives on diversity in supply chains; discuss the ideas put forward by women farm workers; find out why ActionAid's CEO thinks care is central to food justice; and much more.

Please spread the word and join us for this discussion!

To register, please visit: <http://www.oxfam.ca/grow/food-and-gender-registration>

For more information, please contact Lauren Ravon (lauren.ravon@oxfam.ca).

Ten experts, ten essays, one topic: Making the food system work for women

Vandana Shiva, philosopher, feminist and environmental activist

Elizabeth Vazquez, CEO of WEConnect and a world leader in global supplier diversity

Jayati Ghosh, feminist economist and professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University

Joanna Kerr, CEO of ActionAid International and former Executive Director of AWID

Nidhi Tandon, social activist and director of Networked Intelligence for Development

Tinna Nielsen, senior diversity and inclusion consultant, currently working at Arla Foods

Pamela Caro, Chilean feminist researcher working with CLOC-La Via Campesina

Alexandra Spieldoch, women's rights activist, formerly with WOCAN

Fatima Shabodien, former director of Women on Farms in South Africa

Sophia Murphy, senior advisor to the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

PLUS: Oliver De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

<http://www.oxfam.ca/grow/food-and-gender-registration>

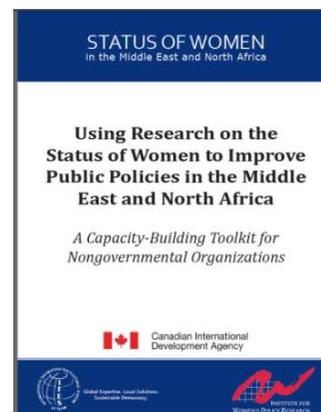
BOOKS & REPORTS

Using Research on the Status of Women to Improve Public Policies in the Middle East and North Africa: A Capacity-Building Toolkit for Nongovernmental Organizations

By Denise L. Baer, Ph.D., Jane M. Henrici, Ph.D., Layla Moughari, Barbara Gault, Ph.D.

This toolkit provides methods, techniques and tips for individuals and organizations to undertake and use research on the status of women as a mechanism for positive change in the lives of women, their families and communities. It was designed as a part of a larger project, the Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa (SWMENA). To download the toolkit for free follow the link

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/11_12/11_12/111212_middle.htm



Ensure Perpetrators Prosecuted, Health Services for Victims of Rape, Domestic Violence
Colombia's laws on violence against women are not adequately protecting victims displaced by the armed conflict, Human Rights Watch said in a new report released today. Approximately two million internally displaced women and girls face high rates of rape and

domestic violence. Daunting obstacles impede displaced victims' access to healthcare, justice, and protection services.

The 101-page report, "Rights Out of Reach: Obstacles to Health, Justice, and Protection for Displaced Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Colombia," documents how recent improvements in Colombia's laws, policies, and programs on rape and domestic violence have not translated into more effective justice, healthcare, and protection for displaced women and girls. More than half of the country's roughly four million displaced are female.

"For many displaced women and girls, the hardships of displacement are compounded by the trauma of rape and domestic violence," said Amanda Klasing, women's rights researcher at Human Rights Watch. "And despite good laws and policies that have been enacted in recent years, they still face enormous difficulty in getting the medical attention they're entitled to. And, they rarely see their abusers brought to justice." Colombia has high reported rates of rape and domestic violence generally, and national surveys have found even higher rates among the displaced. A 2011 government sponsored survey found that almost 48 percent of displaced women reported suffering domestic violence, and more than 9 percent reported being raped by someone other than their partner. This compares to 37 percent of women in the general population who reported intimate partner violence, and 6 percent who reported rape by someone other than their partner, in a 2010 national survey. Official data on violence against women is limited, however, especially on sexual violence related to the conflict and displacement. Human Rights Watch calls on the government to collect this data, to better adapt its laws and policies to protect displaced women and girls. Human Rights Watch interviewed 80 displaced women and girls, nearly all of whom were victims of rape or domestic violence, living in 4 major cities, along with more than 100 government officials, health care practitioners, rights advocates, service providers, and other civil society representatives who have worked extensively with victims of rape or domestic violence.

One displaced woman interviewed by Human Rights Watch was raped five times over the course of a decade; her sister was also raped, along with her sister's 5-year-old daughter.

"When rapists get away with their crimes, it not only undermines Colombia's laws on sexual violence but encourages the perpetrators to rape again," said Klasing.

Delays and Denial of Care

Uprooted from their homes and mostly impoverished, displaced women and girls who become victims of rape and domestic violence are often unfamiliar with health and justice institutions in their new locations. Many have little money for transportation and other costs to seek services, lack trust in government authorities, and fear retribution from their attackers.

Immediate health services are crucial for victims of rape and domestic violence, yet displaced women and girls described delays, denial of care, and mistreatment by health care providers. They told Human Rights Watch that medical facilities failed to screen for signs of abuse, hospital staff sometimes violated confidentiality and mistreated victims. Some health workers interviewed by Human Rights Watch lacked basic knowledge regarding handling rape and domestic violence cases, and said they received little training on how to deal with displaced victims. In several cases, health facilities delayed care beyond when time-sensitive treatment to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections would work.

Victims also faced serious obstacles when seeking justice, including mistreatment by authorities and evidentiary challenges. Victims and advocates told Human Rights Watch that officials sometimes asked rape victims humiliating questions about past sexual history, what the victim was wearing, and what she did to provoke the attack.

“If you do file a formal complaint about [it] at the family commissioners, they say, ‘He hit you because you must have done something,’” a member of a Cartagena women’s working group told Human Rights Watch.

While gender-based violence cases can be investigated without physical evidence, victims told Human Rights Watch that prosecutors seemed unwilling to pursue cases that lacked such evidence. In some instances, victims said they could not produce physical evidence due to delays in accessing forensic testing. For example, one rape victim said it took 10 days for the forensic medical agency to examine her, at which point no physical evidence remained.

Humanitarian assistance programs for the displaced do not adequately take into account how domestic violence can pose a barrier to accessing aid. To access humanitarian assistance, including food, housing, and health care, families must officially register as displaced. When a husband registers the family in his name, as is often the case, victims of domestic violence can feel trapped. Women can change their registration after leaving abusive husbands, but women often do not know this. Several domestic violence victims said they felt they had to choose between staying in abusive households or losing humanitarian assistance necessary to survive.

Good Laws, Poor Implementation

Colombia has one of the most advanced legal and policy frameworks in the region to address violence against women and girls. For example, a 2008 law to prevent and punish violence against women recognizes that all government entities have the duty to work in coordination to provide integrated services to women victims of violence. The law extends important rights, including that victims should receive information, services, protection, and reparations.

Colombia’s criminal code, laws on the rights of the displaced, and Constitutional Court rulings also address rights and remedies for victims of violence against women.

Colombia also has innovative protection measures for victims of gender-based violence and for human rights defenders. These programs offer essential, sometimes life-saving support. Yet displaced women leaders - as well as rights advocates and service providers - identified shortcomings in how these measures work specifically for displaced women. One important concern is that children are not in practice covered by protection measures assigned to them by the National Protection Unit, despite threats against them and despite a ministry of interior protocol allowing them to be covered.

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Colombian government take steps to close the gaps in laws and policies to help displaced women who are victims of sexual and domestic violence by:

- Establishing an independent commission to conduct a rigorous review of current practices in institutions that directly provide care or services;

- Collecting accurate data regarding the scope of gender-based violence related to the conflict and displacement;

- Expanding, strengthening, and ensuring continuity of training programs for health and justice system employees;

- Carrying out public awareness campaigns to familiarize displaced women and girls with their rights and the services available to them; and

- Passing pending legislation on access to justice for victims of sexual violence to facilitate successful prosecution of perpetrators of gender-based violence crimes.

A bill pending in Colombia’s Congress would promote access to justice for victims of sexual violence, with an emphasis on the armed conflict. The proposed law would amend Colombia’s criminal code to bring provisions related to sexual violence more closely in line with international standards. It also enumerates a range of important rights and guarantees for victims of sexual violence. For example, it would entitle victims to receive copies of

official documents related to their case. Their sexual history should be excluded as evidence where irrelevant and may prejudice the case, and services should be in accessible locations that are clean, safe, comfortable, and private. The bill also encourages judicial officers to exercise their ex officio power to investigate sexual violence crimes to avoid impunity.

“The bill is crucially important as it would address major gaps in the existing law - gaps that enable humiliation of victims and impunity for perpetrators,” said Klasing. “Once it’s passed, however, the challenge will remain ensuring effective implementation.”

Selected testimony from the report

“Seeking medical attention for the [sexual] violence was difficult. Ten days later, I was finally able to get help.” - Monica N. (pseudonym), Bogotá, February 22, 2012. Monica went to a hospital immediately after she was raped in 2011 in Bogotá, but was only given an appointment with the gynecological specialist 10 days later. By the time she received treatment, she had developed a fungal infection of the vagina from the rape. Her doctors did not inform her about emergency contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

“There was no orientation. No route where I needed to go. No one said what happens at each step.” - Viviana N. (pseudonym), Cali, May 7, 2012. Viviana, displaced to Cali, filed a criminal complaint with a prosecutor in 2007 saying that her husband had beaten her for years. The prosecutor provided no information about referrals, including for health services.

“They [doctors] don’t believe the women. They will ask them questions to see if they are lying about the rape.” - Paola A. Salgado Piedrahita, lawyer, La Mesa por la Vida y la Salud de las Mujeres, May 10, 2012. Paola has worked with dozens of victims of rape seeking legal access to abortion and connects them with free legal representation.

“This man will kill me and nothing will happen.” - Dolores G. (pseudonym), Cartagena, April 24, 2012. Dolores’s displaced family moved to Cartagena in 2002, where her husband beat her severely. She sought help from police and prosecutors, but they offered no protection. She left her husband, but he tracked her down and raped her at knife-point. She fled back to her hometown, but after threats from armed men, went back to her husband in Cartagena and endured six more years of abuse.

<http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Issues-and-Analysis/Colombia-Obstacles-to-Care-for-Abused-Displaced-Women>

Rights Out of Reach

This 101-page report documents how recent improvements in Colombia’s laws, policies, and programs on rape and domestic violence have not translated into more effective justice, healthcare, and protection for displaced women and girls. More than half of the country’s roughly four million displaced are female.

- Summary
- Recommendations
- Methodology
- Gender-based Violence and Displacement
- Colombia’s Normative Framework for Gender-Based Violence and Rights of the Displaced
- Shortcomings of Health Services after Gender-Based Violence
- Obstacles to Justice after Gender-Based Violence
- Barriers to Assistance and Protection Measures
- International Legal Obligations



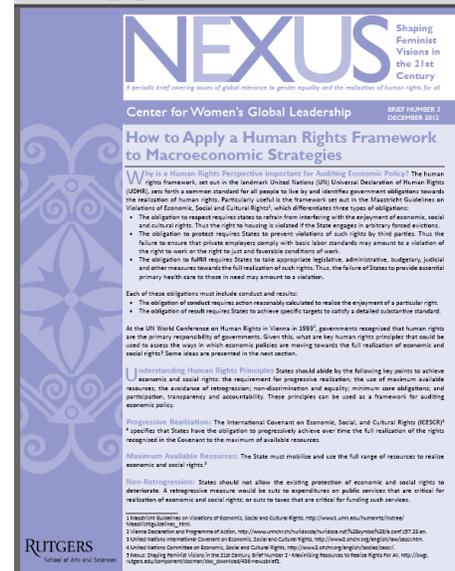
o Acknowledgments

To read the entire report <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/11/14/rights-out-reach>

How to Apply a Human Rights Framework to Macroeconomic Strategies

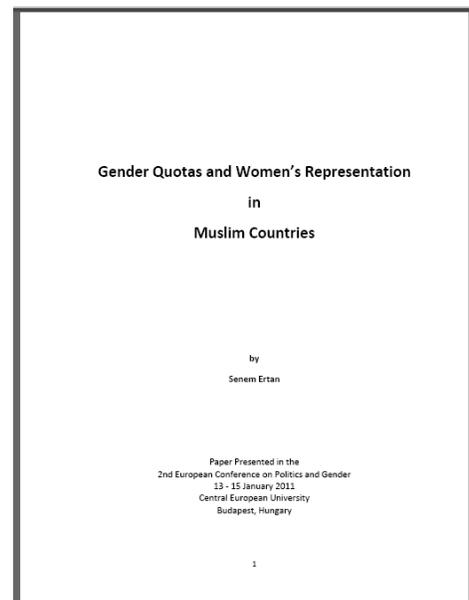
At the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, governments recognized that human rights are the primary responsibility of governments. Given this, human rights principles could be used to assess the ways in which economic policies are moving towards the full realization of economic and social rights. However, how does one measure a government's performance on economic and social rights? This brief provides an introduction to conducting an economic and social rights audit on economic policy.

At the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, governments recognized that human rights are the primary responsibility of governments. Given this, what are key human rights principles that could be used to assess the ways in which economic policies are moving towards the full realization of economic and social rights? To read the entire brief <http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/New-Resources2/Nexus-Brief-How-to-Apply-a-Human-Rights-Framework-to-Macroeconomic-Strategies>



Gender Quotas & Women's Representation in Muslim Countries

The main purpose of this paper is to explain how the quota adoption affects women's representation in predominantly Muslim countries. When answering this question two famous arguments of Inglehart and Norris will be questioned; first secularization processes accompanied by the modernization processes improve gender equality and second, Islamic religious heritage is a barrier to gender equality (Inglehart & Norris, 2003a; 2004). However, there is a variety of cultural practices in regard to women in countries with Islamic heritage. The public policies for women's issues and political participation of women hugely differ from one country to another. While in some countries such as Turkey women enfranchised in 1930 even before the enfranchisement of women in many European countries, women in some countries such as Saudi Arabia still cannot vote or run for the elections. To overlook the differences between countries with Muslim cultural heritage could result one to misconstrue the political situation of women in Muslim societies. Moreover, if Islamic heritage is a real barricade to the women's representation, the countries in which there is a fusion of state and religion would not spend extra efforts to improve women's political representation by adopting gender quotas. Secondly, this paper aims to discover whether Muslim regions have different trends in regard to the determinants of women's representation and quota adoption policies. Scholarly work has been demonstrated various indicators of women's descriptive representation; level of democratization, development level, institutional



regulations, level of separation of state and religion, varying interpretation of religious texts, acceptance of international norms or policy preferences of political actors, etc. However, it is also argued by some scholars that democratization, modernization or cultural change contexts has not been adequate to explain women friendly policy changes in some contexts (Htun and Weldon, 2007). Therefore, a systematic analysis of determinants of women's descriptive representation in parliaments would shed some light on the debate in the related literature.

The first part of this paper includes some reflections to this body of literature which consists the theoretical background of this paper. The second part includes an explanation of the data sources and methods embedded by this study. The third part of the study covers the empirical analyses that investigate whether being a Muslim country has a negative effect on female proportions in single and lower houses of the legislatures. Additionally, it will be questioned whether Muslim countries have different trends of quota adoption than the rest of the world. Lastly, by taking religious affiliation of states as a determinant of women's political access, I will examine whether fusion of religion and state or secularity has an impact on adoption of gender quotas and women's political participation.
<http://www.ecprnet.eu/sg/ecpg/documents/papers/A-K/ErtanS.pdf>

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