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NEWS & ARTICLES

GENDER ACTIVISM

Activists march to demand domestic violence legislation in Lebanon

Several hundred activists marched from across the capital Sunday morning to demand that Parliament outlaw domestic violence. Setting off from the neighborhood of Sanayeh and arriving outside the residence of Speaker Nabih Berri in Ain al-Tineh, protesters chanted under banners reading “Forgotten women will not forget.” Political parties from across the spectrum, with the exception of Hezbollah and Amal, took part in the march, although Hezbollah’s AlManar television covered the event, thought to be a first for the channel.

The march was organized by Kafa, an NGO that in 2010 handed a draft law to Parliament on the issue, which a parliamentary subcommittee began studying in May 2011. Over the next year the committee met a total of 39 times, finalizing its amendments in August 2012. During this period the title of the text was changed from one referring solely to violence against women to one designed to protect the whole family.



A crucial clause legislating against marital rape was also removed by the committee, with the justification being that consent is presumed between a husband and wife.

Since the draft law was finalized it has been languishing in Parliament. The March 14 coalition is currently boycotting sessions, but Sunday’s protest was aimed partially at encouraging them to make an exception were Berri to table a session that would include debate of the domestic violence law.

Though disappointed with the pace of developments thus far, Maya Ammar, from Kafa, said that the growing support from political parties was encouraging.

The group is also publishing, via the media, a series of testimonies from victims of domestic abuse, addressed to Berri, which are also being sent to MPs.

In one letter published last week, a woman writes of her experiences:

“I recall a night when he started to hit me at 6 p.m. and then he dragged me to the toilet and put my head in the toilet and kept his foot on my neck and kept hitting me until 4 a.m. He broke my arm. ... Then he dragged me to bed and raped me. When our neighbor tried to interfere he said, ‘This is my wife and I have the right to do whatever I want to her.’”

The letter goes on, “If we had fair laws then my husband wouldn’t have dared to hit me and my children and my son wouldn’t have inherited his father’s violent behavior.”

The powerful accounts, which emerged from Kafa’s listening and counseling center sessions and were published anonymously, are creating a buzz, Ammar said. Although Berri has yet to respond, Metn MP Sami Gemayel replied Friday to one addressed to him in An-Nahar,

commending the author's braveness in speaking out and saying that the law had his full support.

A further 45 MPs have also vowed to support the domestic violence law when it is eventually debated in Parliament, and activists are now working to lobby the remaining 82.

Ahead of elections, scheduled for the summer, Ammar believes action such as Sunday's protest, and the publication of letters from victims of domestic abuse, will help promote the issue as a priority for other women voters.

"They are becoming more aware of this issue and so perhaps some women will choose not to participate in the elections or only vote for candidates who they know support the law," she said.

However several attendants at the rally were critical of the presence of political party members.

Mira Bittar, a 23-year-old assistant account executive who had come from Tripoli to attend the march, said she was "very, very upset" to see the turn-out by representatives of political parties, which included the Future Movement, Kataeb, the Lebanese Forces, the Free Patriotic Movement, the Communist Party and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party.

Shocked to see political representation at the protest, Bittar said she was saddened to see the issue used as a campaigning tool ahead of the election, since not all of the parties had a track record for supporting the legislation.

"I am really upset that after all the cause is going to be turned into a game of politics, since the elections are coming up and politicians are desperate to win some votes."

She also pointed out the inconsistency in political groups attending a protest that was held under the slogan, "The lives of women are more important than keeping your parliamentary seats."

Ammar said, however, that she believed the political representation was positive, and not mere politicking.

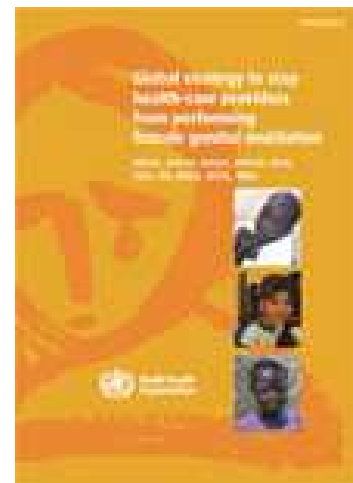
Another protester, 21-year-old Nour Chamoun, said that "At first I didn't like being part of a demonstration that had political slogans. ... But then I realized that we do need the support of each party so that the law passes."

She also has faith in KAFA, and believes that sooner or later the draft law will be passed by Parliament: "For me, everything in Lebanon changes eventually, it's just a matter of time."

Read more: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Feb-25/207798-activists-march-to-demand-domestic-violence-legislation.ashx#ixzz2LwFnuh00>

International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation

The International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation is observed each year to raise awareness about this practice. Female genital mutilation of any type has been recognized as a harmful practice and violation of the human rights of girls and women. WHO is committed to the elimination of female genital mutilation within a generation and is focusing on advocacy, research and guidance for health professionals and health systems. Female genital mutilation (FGM) refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Female genital mutilation has no known health benefits. On the contrary, it is associated with a series of short and long-term risks to both physical, mental and sexual health and well-being. FGM is affecting about 140 million girls and women, and more than 3 million girls are at risk every year. A special focus for WHO



this year, is the troubling trend of health-care providers increasingly being the ones performing female genital mutilation, and thereby contributing to legitimize and maintain the practice. For more information follow the link http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/fgm/rhr_10_9/en/index.html

Draft Agreed Conclusions Presented by Bureau Pre CSW

The Bureau of the UN Commission on the Status of Women plays a crucial role in facilitating the preparation for, and in ensuring the successful outcome of the annual sessions of the Commission. Bureau members serve for two years.



DRAFT PRESENTED BY CSW BUREAU-UN Commission on the Status of Women 57th session; 4 - 15 March 2013

The Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls

Draft Agreed Conclusions

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth and fifteenth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women. (E/CN.6/2011/12, CSW55 agreed conclusions, para.1). The Commission also reaffirms the international commitments made in the Programme of Action at the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation (based on General Assembly resolution A/RES/67/144, Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, PP7).
2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization, provide a legal framework for the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (E/CN.6/2013/3 paras.3, 4 and E/CN.6/2013/4 para.4).
3. The Commission reaffirms the commitment to the full and effective implementation of and follow-up to all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women, and the Economic and Social Commission and its subsidiary bodies on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (E/CN.6/2007/9, and based on CSW51 agreed conclusions, para.4). It also reaffirms its previous sets of agreed conclusions on violence against women and the girl child, as well as relevant Security Council and Human Rights Council resolutions (E/CN.6/2013/3 para.7 and E/CN.6/2013/4 para.5).
4. The Commission stresses that “violence against women” means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or

arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (based on A/RES/67/144, OP1).

5. The Commission condemns all forms of violence against women and girls. It recognizes their changing manifestations and contexts and that intimate partner violence and domestic violence remain the most prevalent forms. It also notes that particular groups of women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are exposed to increased risk of violence (based on E/CN.6/2013/3 para.11 and E/CN.6/2013/4 para.9).
6. The Commission recognizes that violence against women and girls occurs in all countries, contexts and settings and is one of the most pervasive violations of human rights. Violence against women and girls is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women and systemic gender-based discrimination (based on E/CN.6/2013/4 para.15).
7. The Commission urges States to strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls and to refrain from invoking any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination as set out in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (based on A/RES/67/144 OP10).
8. The Commission urges all States to meet their obligations at all levels, using all appropriate means of a legal, political, administrative and social nature, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including women and girls, and to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls and eliminate impunity (based on A/RES/67/144 OP 11).
9. The Commission stresses that the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women in all its dimensions is essential for addressing the root causes of violence against women and girls. It also recognizes that the prevention of and response to violence are interlinked, requiring States to act at each and every opportunity and to adopt a comprehensive and holistic approach that ensures accountability (based on E/CN.6/2013/3 para.9 and E/CN.6/2013/4 paras.15, 19).
10. The Commission welcomes the progress made in addressing violence against women and girls such as the adoption of laws and policies, the implementation of prevention measures, the establishment of support services for survivors and improvements in data collection, analysis and research. The Commission also welcomes the contributions and participation by all stakeholders including governments, women's and other civil society organizations and survivors in efforts to address violence against women and girls (based on A/67/220 paras.62-64).
11. The Commission recognizes that despite progress made, significant gaps and challenges remain in ending the scourge of violence against women and girls. It is concerned about the gap between commitments and action; the inadequate implementation of legal and policy frameworks; the insufficient allocation of funding and resources; and that existing efforts are not comprehensive, coordinated, consistent, sustained or adequately monitored and evaluated (based on E/CN.6/2013/3 para.58 and E/CN.6/2013/4 para.13).

12. The Commission stresses that ending violence against women and girls is an imperative for the achievement of gender equality, human rights, peace and security, development and the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (based on A/RES/67/144 PP 15.). To read all the recommendations follow the link http://www.wunrn.com/news/2013/02_13/02_11/021113_csw.htm

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

The Gendered Body Public: Egypt, Sexual Violence and Revolution

We must acknowledge, sit with, and address the sexual violence that has, is, and will occur in and around Tahrir Square. How do we do this work in a responsible and ethical manner that is in solidarity with Egypt's ongoing (and multiple) revolutions? How do we retain and respect political, economic and social complexity in the face of the horrors of mass and public sexual assault?

How to write when all you want to do is shout?

Friday 25 January 2013 was the second anniversary of the outbreak of the Egyptian revolution. Today the revolution continues, as protestors face down government allies and troops across Egypt. Bodies are bruised, bloodied, and killed. Rocks are thrown, bullets shot, and bottles broken. We are learning, once again, that violence is always plural and weighted differently. Those on the front lines, the frail, and the young are more vulnerable to that gas that burns eyes, those clubs that break bones, and those boots that kick flesh. Female protestors are also more vulnerable to the multiple violences of revolution, of protest, of repression. Women are more vulnerable to violence in times of peace and of stability, and no matter who is in power. Female protestors have been beaten, dragged through streets, and shot at along with their brethren protestors. They have been imprisoned, disappeared, and repressed just as ruthlessly as their male comrades. They have been pinched, grabbed, and harassed by both regime supporters and their political allies at Tahrir. They have been stripped and they have been raped, in the offices of police and medical examiners, and in the spaces of the public. Their vaginas, anuses, and breasts, the very organs that mark them as women, have been targeted and violated by individuals and groups of men on every side of Egypt's political divide. Sadly, this fact, that it is precisely the violence and rape of women that transgresses political divides, does not shock us. The daily possibility of sexual harassment, assault, and repression forms, in large part, the female political subject(s) in the modern state era. Public assaults in Cairo, mass and public rapes in India, and the fact that every two minutes a woman is sexually assaulted in the US are only amplifications and spectacular examples of the sexual violence that women and girls face across the divides of nations, cultures, religions, and economic systems; in peace and in war. It is sad but not surprising to note the silence on these gendered dynamics in the coverage of the second anniversary of the Egyptian revolution. It should be all too clear that Tahrir is a discriminately gendered space. But despite efforts to counter this trend, most analysis is deafeningly silent on the violence of this process. By de-gendering Tahrir the square, the protestors, and the revolution itself is depoliticized. This is similarly the case across the uprising and upheavals in the Arab world and beyond. We cannot continue to deny that men and women and boys and girls face different assemblages of violence and vulnerability daily in the streets of Homs or in a Jordanian refugee camp. To de-gender the Syrian uprising is to depoliticize its costs, the people waging it and the tactics used by them and by the state. There is no universal, ungendered, unclassed, and

anonymous protestor or body of [protestors](#). And yet, writing about rape in Syria, sexual assault in Egypt is somehow a “social issue” and, shunted off to those boxes called “gender studies,” “women’s issues,” or “social/cultural dynamics,” comfortably outside *politics*. We can no longer afford such comfort.

This comfort is unethical. It imposes analytical limitations on the very possibility of understanding the various ongoing struggles for transformative change we are witnessing today. It reinforces a long-standing reality in which agents of power appropriate, control, and limit struggles for gender equality by folding them in the residual categories of “women’s empowerment,” and “women’s participation.” This folding pretends to offer an easy solution to gender



violence and inequality—that they will simply dissipate if more women were to exercise their right to vote or serve in parliament, for example. In Egypt, it is this bifurcation of the “social” from the “political” that has allowed Mubarakists, officers, and Brothers, along with their regional and international allies, to set the terms of struggles for gender equality. Those terms—gender quotas for parliament and cabinet, family laws, and birth control—are silent on the dire need of meaningful social *and* political change. It is these false dichotomies between gender and politics, between the economic and the cultural that will continue to impede the very possibility of transformative revolution in Egypt and beyond.

http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/9826/the-gendered-body-public_egypt-sexual-violence-and

EGYPT - Vigils in 35 Countries Condemn Abuse of Egyptian Women Activists

Scores of people held a vigil in Talaat Harb Square in downtown Cairo, denouncing what they called “sexual terrorism of women in Egypt.” Those in attendance said the government has failed to protect female protesters and activists during demonstrations and marches recently. Meanwhile, dozens of mostly women also staged a protest on the stairs of Alexandria Library.

They held banners that read “No to harassment,” “A harasser is no human,” and “Be a man and protect women instead of harassing them,” protesting the harassment of women during marches and demonstrations around Tahrir Square in the capital. They also demanded



harassers be punished for trying to scare women away from activism. Similar gatherings are being held in Damietta and Mansoura, according to Sally Zohny, cofounder of the Facebook group "Uprising of Women in the Arab World", which was one of the organizations behind the protests. The demonstrations are in conjunction with similar vigils being held in 35 countries on Tuesday. The vigils, staged outside Egyptian embassies and consulates, were in support of victims of sexual harassment and violence in recent weeks following the second anniversary of the Egyptian revolution's beginning.

"We have received photos and data from activists expressing their solidarity with this cause," she said. Outside the Egyptian Embassy in Armenia, activists carried banners that read "Solidarity with Egyptian Women." They said the advancement of Egypt depends on the liberation of women. Despite harsh conditions, Syrians participated in an electronic vigil, apologizing for being unable to demonstrate in person before the Egyptian Embassy in Damascus due to risks of arrest.

This is the first non-virtual initiative organized by the page that was founded by four women from Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia in 2011. The page has organized two electronic campaigns on social networking sites.

Sexual harassment and assaults at demonstrations are on the rise since the second anniversary of the revolution.

Some observers suggested the attacks are organized and systematic, with the intention both of disparaging the protests and scaring women away from participating in the public sphere. Some activists accused the Muslim Brotherhood of contributing to the attacks on those protesting its rule.

Members of the Shura Council Human Rights Council during a Monday session, said that given that women know they will be attacked, they should take full responsibility for choosing to take part in protests and marches.

The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights condemned these comments, calling them an insult to female demonstrators and reiterating that those on the receiving end of sexual harassment and violence are not to blame. To read more follow the link: http://www.wunrn.com/news/2013/02_13/02_18/021813_egypt.htm

... Also in Egypt: Gender Violence Around Tahir Square

Violent sexual assaults against women, including rapes, have surged in the vicinity of Cairo's iconic Tahrir Square in recent months. They peaked in scale and brutality on 25 January 2013 during protests commemorating the second anniversary of the start of the 2011 uprising that ousted President Hosni Mubarak. In a memorandum sent to President Mohamed Morsi on 29 June 2012 shortly after his election, Amnesty International urged him to address chronic violence and discrimination against women, including the targeting of female protesters by security and armed forces. In spite of Morsi's promise to be the president of all Egyptians, such calls went unheeded. It is vital that President Morsi, as well as leaders of ruling and opposition political parties, exercise strong political will to tackle gender-based violence. President Morsi as head of state must take immediate action to ensure that all incidents of sexual assault and harassment of women in and around Tahrir Square are effectively investigated and perpetrators brought to justice. Until the pervasive climate of impunity for such acts of gender-based violence ends, women will continue to



face violent attacks while their attackers brazenly go unpunished. Long overdue legal and institutional reforms must also be introduced to stop repetition of such crimes and end impunity. For more information follow the link

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2013/02_13/02_04/020413_egypt.htm

Rule Requires Gender Segregation Partitions in Shops of Saudi Arabia

A new ruling issued by Saudi Labor Minister Adel Fakeih and approved by Abdullatif Al-Sheikh, the head of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, require shops employing both men and women to build segregation walls to enforce the separation of men and women.

The barriers to be built will be no shorter than 6 feet in workplaces that employ members of both sexes. “It is not a wall,” said Dr. Aisha Natto, member of Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry. “They said it is only a partition between the sexes in a shop that employ both men and women. It is up to the ceiling. So for those who understood it as a wall, it’s clearly not a wall but just a partition. He said the partition will be approximately between 1 and 1.8 meters. Natto said that it is one of the solutions to empower women to work in these shops. “It is not a government law but a



social law,” she said. “People refuse to have women work as saleswomen. So the government tried a compromise solution so the women can work in shops.” She noted that 50 years ago people refused to have women work in schools but now that has changed. “In my case, I am a writer. Six years ago, they didn’t allow my photo to be published with my articles but now that has changed too,” Natto said. “I am allowed to publish my photo with each of my articles. We just need time. It is a social obstacle and not a government obstacle. It is not a law or has anything to do with religion. There is no such thing as not allowing a woman to work, in religion.” Natto pointed out that the main objective is simply not to have women be in touch with men. “We have 1-million-seven-hundred jobless women in this country. We need the government, the media and organizations to encourage this logistic initiative till we have our women tackle their rising problem of unemployment. We need to help and empower them,” said Natto.

While some Saudi women agree that the decision will bring more employment opportunities for women, others still think that the “wall” is not going to stop any harassment. “It is a totally bad idea to have a wall built to separate both sexes in shops,” said Dalal A. Kaaki, director of women business center at the Makkah Chamber of Commerce and Industry. “The harassment can happen anyway when a man comes to a saleswoman with his family. Building a wall with an intention to separate the sexes has nothing to do with stopping the harassment. Instead, a strong law must be enforced to punish the one who harasses. Implementing such a law will prevent people from attempting to do something bad, whether it is to the salesmen, saleswomen or the customers.” The Ministry of Labor decision to employ women at lingerie and cosmetic boutiques in 2011 was to create more jobs for Saudi women, among whom the rate of unemployment reached a height of 30 percent, according to official figures. According to recent reports, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Al-Sheikh said in a Friday sermon that authorities must adhere to Shariah by making sure that men and women are separated as much as possible at all times. For more information follow the link <http://www.arabnews.com/gender-segregation-partitions-draw-mixed-reaction>

Iranian Single Women Might Need Father's Permission to Go Abroad

Single women in [Iran](#) will need the permission of their guardians to be able to leave the country if a new bill secures enough votes in parliament.

At the moment, unmarried women and men above the age of 18 can leave the country if they have a passport but, according to the new bill, single women would need official consent from their guardian, usually their father.

Married women in Iran always need their husband's permission to be able to hold a passport both under the current legislation that dates back to the pre-1979 Islamic revolution and under the proposed bill.

Husbands can ban their wives from leaving the country at any time. Divorced women, however, are currently free to hold a passport and leave the country without permission.

"Anyone above the age of 18 can apply for a passport,"

Hossein Naghavi-Hosseini, the speaker of the parliamentary committee on national security and foreign policy told the semi-official Isna news agency. "According to this bill ... married women of any age need the written consent of their husband to be able to have a passport and single women above the age of 18 will need the permission of their guardian." Single women whose guardian denies them permission could dispute the decision in a court.

Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, women's rights campaigners have struggled to abolish the need for the husband's consent but the new bill, if passed, would be a major setback.

Shadi Sadr, a prominent women's rights activist and human rights lawyer, told the Guardian: "The mentality behind these controversial laws is that women should have owners, to give power to men to have control over women." The majority of people inside Iran who were barred from leaving the country were either women who did not have the permission of their husbands or tax evaders, she added.

Mohammad Mostafaei, a well-known Iranian lawyer currently living in exile in Norway, called the need for permission "the modern slavery". In an article published on the opposition website Rahesabz he writes: "Only slaves at the time of slavery needed permission to go here or there."

Barring citizens from leaving the country is one of the ways the Islamic republic has punished many of its critics in recent years. In a recent example, the family members of the jailed award-winning lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh, including her 12-year-old daughter, were subjected to a travel ban. Source <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/15/iranian-women-fathers-permission-abroad>



GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Lebanon - First Civil Marriage

"We state of our own accord and without any coercion, as equals in and before the law according to the preamble of the constitution and its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially Article 16 of said declaration, that the man among us has taken the woman as his wife, and that the woman has taken the man as her husband ..."

This is but one expression in the marriage contract signed by Kholoud Succariyeh and Nidal Darwish, who were married in Lebanon's first civil ceremony. As is the case with any Lebanese couple who chooses this form of union, they were supposed to travel to Cyprus, where civil



marriage is permitted. But then Kholoud met by chance a civil society activist who proposed that Kholoud's wedding be the first civil marriage held in Lebanon. Thus started Kholoud and Nidal's journey.

"I was attending a lecture about the art of photography, and while waiting for Nidal, I noticed this poster saying: Let us get to know civil marriage and secularism before they take us to sectarianism," Kholoud told NOW. "A woman came to me and said, 'Secularism is not against religion,' and I answered, 'I know. Just because I am veiled this doesn't mean I'm against secularism.' And in order to prove my point, I told her that [Nidal and] I were getting ready to go to Cyprus to have a civil marriage.

"It was then that she told me about the attempt to celebrate the first civil marriage in Lebanon. I discussed the idea with Nidal, and we told her we agreed on condition of total anonymity, as we feared our parents would not accept it. We then met with [lawyer] Talal Hussein, who prepared the draft study, and had several sessions with him in order for him to make sure that we were ready for such a step."

Preparations for the marriage began after Kholoud and her parents reached an agreement on "being spoken for" as per formal religious rules, without registering the marriage at a Muslim religious tribunal.

The first step was to strike out the mention of both Kholoud's and Nidal's sects from their respective IDs to prove before the law that they are not affiliated with a sect that forces them to marry before a religious court. They thus acquired the right to hold a civil marriage as per Article 60 L.R.

Then they had to obtain a form signed by the mayor proving that there are no objections to their marriage and put the marriage announcement up on a billboard 15 days before the wedding date to make sure that there were no objections to it. The announcement was

supposed to be published in the Official Gazette or at least two newspapers, but in order to prevent any hindrances, Kholoud and Nidal just posted the announcement on the doors of their parents' houses and on the door of their own house. They also had to obtain a legal document signed by a notary public after both parties chose the articles included in the marriage contract as well as a financial disclosure that guarantees the rights of each party to the marriage.

After a few snags in obtaining the necessary paperwork, Kholoud and Nidal signed their civil marriage contract on November 10, 2012, thus making them the first Lebanese couple to be wedded by civil marriage in Lebanon. The request is now in the hands of the Consultations Committee at the Ministry of the Interior pending its official announcement.

On the legal level, Hussein, who authored the draft, explained that "The marriage was held based on Decree No. 60 L.R. - a numeration of decrees adopted by the High Commissioner [during the French Mandate in Lebanon] - of 1936, which organizes and recognizes sects and grants them rights. The same decree also recognizes individuals, and we used this same law to strike out the reference to sect [on one's ID]."

Applying Decree No. 60 L.R. for people who are not officially affiliated to any sect provides a solution for civil marriage, he added. "Not being affiliated to a sect does not mean not being a believer; it is merely not making an administrative disclosure of one's sect and subjecting [instead] to civil courts."

Lebanese law imposes constraints on enjoying the right to marriage, Hussein argues. "Let us suppose that a person wants to marry and there's no law. This means there are no constraints to enjoying the right to marriage unless the marriage one is about to enter into contravenes the constitution, general order or good ethics. Civil marriage is the only [form] that fits the constitution, which includes provisions about freedom and equality; it is the constitution, rather than religious marriage, that provides freedom and equality," Hussein said.

Good-natured attempts to ensure the right to civil marriage in Lebanon, Hussein said, are often misdirected. "Some people were calling for a law pertaining to civil marriage and propose incomplete drafts that are not the object of enough study or serious public debate. In so doing, they act as though they need to give [people] the right [to choose civil marriage] and as though there is no legislation. Yet this is not true: Legislation does exist, and there is no way to misinterpret the provisions of Decree No. 60 L.R., which includes a reference to a law. This is either a reference to a French law - and this is the most probable option - or to a civil law according to the person's own choice, or to any ample provisions for the organization of marriages."

"The law allows the two people who wish to marry the right to choose the provisions that suit them in the contract. In contrast, religious marriage - or some forms of it - is subjected to the Ottoman family law with regard to certain provisions. When we say that Decree No. 60 L.R. is a reference to French civil marriage, this makes it part of the Lebanese law. Furthermore, the French law does not contravene the constitution or sectarian bylaws or public order, and is applicable in courts located in France, Turkey, Cyprus or Switzerland between Lebanese [couples] or [a couple formed by] a Lebanese person and a non-Lebanese person. In other words, it is applicable in Lebanese civil courts and this does not cause any problems."

Kholoud and Nidal chose civil marriage because they believe it is the best expression of a relationship built on true partnership, equality and rejection of dependency. Will the

Lebanese state adopt civil marriage as a gateway to break sectarian constraints and build a civil state? To read more follow the link

https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/reportsfeatures/lebanons_first_civil_marriage

Breakthrough in Saudi Arabia: Women Allowed in Parliament

King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia issued Friday a historic decree allowing women to be members of the kingdom's previously all-male Shura Council for the first time. The decree amended two article in the council's statute introducing a 20 percent quota for women in the country's 150-member Shura Council, and the king appointed 30 women to join the consultative assembly. Dr. Hayat bint Sulaiman bin Hasan Sindi (Courtesy of Seraty) The assembly, whose members are appointed by the king, works as the formal advisory body of Saudi Arabia. It can propose draft laws following which it would present them to the king, who, in turn, would either pass or reject them. Saudi Arabia is known for its conservative culture where women are not allowed to drive despite the absence of a law saying so. King Abdullah has introduced cautious economic and social reforms aimed at reconciling Saudi Arabia's religious traditions with the needs of a modern economy and youthful population. The decrees were welcomed by female Saudi novelist Badriya al-Bishr in a statement to AFP as a "promise kept" by the king, who has been treading carefully over the years to empower women in his push for reforms. Thuraya al-Arrayed, an education specialist, who was appointed by the king as a Shura Council member told Al Arabiya that the royal decree "gave confidence to women to take part in important decision-making matters in the country." "It is an opportunity given to us, and I expect this experience to succeed. They are all qualified women," she said. "We are not here to represent ourselves but to represent the public, women and men alike."

"I expect this decision to open doors for qualified women to take part in all fields and not just in politics but in all areas," al-Arrayed said.

Also among the Shura council female members is Thuraya Obaid, a veteran U.N. administrator who served notably as executive director of the U.N. Development Program and undersecretary general of the world body. "They are the cream of the crop," Bishr told AFP. "It is a good surprise and a promise that has been kept," by the king, she said. "The king is determined to place women in the limelight," Bishr added, and voiced hope that her Saudi sisters "will secure more rights" in the future. But the decrees stipulated strict guidelines for allowing women into the once all-male enclave, saying men and women will be segregated inside the council. For more information follow the link <http://www.wluml.org/news/saudi-arabia-breakthrough-saudi-arabia-women-allowed-parliament>



What Women Say - Syria's Humanitarian Crisis

In recent months ICAN's staff have held regular in-person and online consultations with Syrian civil society activists based inside the country or those who have recently left. They are providing relief and development support to refugees and IDPs. They speak of the humanitarian threats, security, political, economic and psycho-social challenges that people are facing and the emergence of a nascent but committed civil society. The international

community must recognize their resilience, and aspirations for the future, and support their efforts to withstand the impact of war. Their work is a testament to the dignity and humanity of Syrians and provides a glimpse of a peaceful pluralistic Syria for which they are striving. This brief summarizes key priorities and recommendations on immediate humanitarian issues that must be addressed by the international community.

1. International aid is not getting through, Syrians have self-organized to provide relief, they need support:

Many Syrians are involved in organizing relief assistance inside and outside the country. They are working independently, with limited access to international funds, yet with access and human capacity to provide assistance (health, shelter, food, education etc) in creative and collaborative ways. They repeatedly state that international aid is not getting through. In some cases corrupt networks are diverting it. In other instances - particularly inside the country - there is insufficient allocation to key areas notably Aleppo and Homs. They mention that 'overheads' are taken such that far less aid reaches the most needy. Supporting Syrian NGOs directly has multiple benefits. They have the ability to make effective use of smaller grants (up to \$100,000). With help they can reinforce their management and institutional capacities to ensure longer-term sustainability. They can develop additional skills and the sectoral expertise needed for the transition and recovery period. Syrian NGOs supported by the international community could be one means of countering the influence of extremists in the country.

2. The situation in Aleppo is dire and getting worse, but local NGOs can make a difference: Aleppo is facing a dire situation, made worse by the attacks on the university campus where many IDPs had sought shelter and refuge. Essential services are lacking and assistance is not getting through. There is fear of spikes in disease due to a sanitation crisis, death, illness and child mortality. Local health professionals have established a hospital to provide healthcare and are planning to establish basic 'health points' to provide care. They are in desperate need of funds, medical supplies, medicines, vaccines and insecticide to stop the mass outbreak of Leishmaniasis¹.

3. Most refugees are not in the camps, and they are in legal and economic limbo: Across Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, only an estimated 20-30% of Syrian refugees are actually in the camps. The majority has sought temporary housing outside the camps, many in the border towns. In part this is due to the poor living conditions within the camps and the lack of safety.

¹ Leishmaniasis is a parasitic infection transmitted by the bite of an infected female sand fly whose hosts are animals, such as dogs or rodents, or human beings. It is spreading in Aleppo due to sand flies breeding in uncollected trash.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/as-fighting-rages-in-aleppo-syrians-face-hunger-disease-and-little-hope-of-aid/2012/12/25/86ab74f0-4d37-11e2-835b-02f92c0daa43_story_1.html

Legal Issues: Refugees outside the camps are in a state of legal limbo. They can neither return home nor register for refugee status and benefits. Those in Turkey often stay on a 3-month visitor visa, which forbids them from working or attending school. Since they are viewed as guests of the Turkish government they cannot register with UNHCR to repatriate to third countries. Their uncertain residency status generates much fear and insecurity.

Human trafficking including sexual exploitation: According to various reports, human trafficking is on the rise, especially for those who want to go to European countries. Entire families have been imprisoned for illegal entry into third countries. Reports indicate that young women and girls being bought by Saudis and others from the Arab Gulf states. Merchants are scouting camps in search of younger virgin girls aged between 14-15. Some

women and girls are given promises of marriage and sent to other countries once they lose their virginity. Some are sent back to Turkey but they are ashamed to return to their families so they fall into prostitution. Child marriages are also becoming more prevalent (reports from camps in Jordan and Turkey) among poorer families. For girls' families these marriages (often informal and unregistered) is justified as giving protection to their daughters (from sexual harassment in camps) but it is also a means of bringing money in and getting rid of an extra mouth to feed.

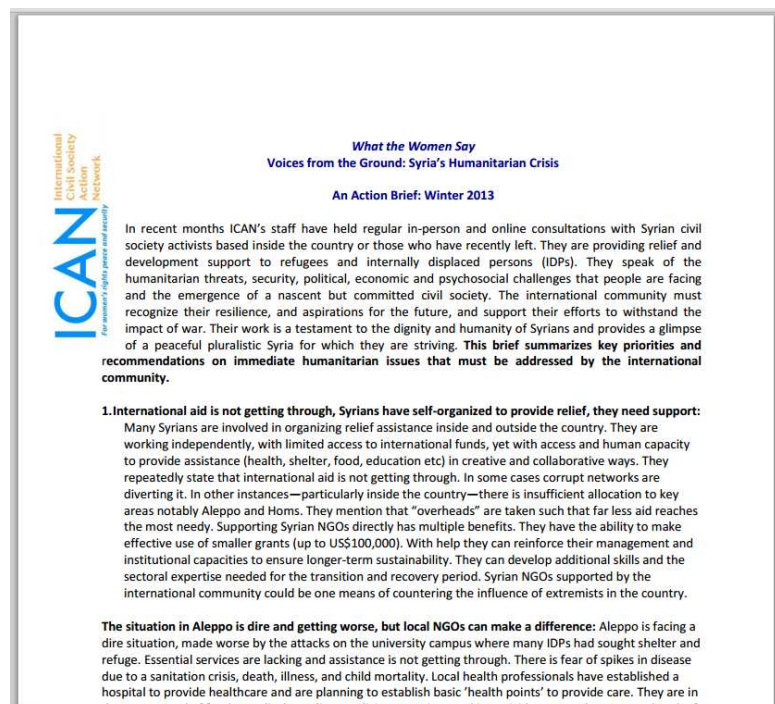
Economics: Syrians are unable to get work permits in Turkey or Jordan. Yet they are desperate to earn incomes and support their families. Joblessness among men is a key source of frustration, emasculation and leading to gender based violence. Those who find employment are vulnerable to exploitation (low pay etc) by their employers and have no legal recourse as they fear deportation if they report incidences to the police. Women heads of households face serious problems providing for their families.

Education: Most Syrian refugees have no access to education. Many children and university aged youth have lost up to 2 years of their education. Even when they register and pay for a class (rare as often they lack the appropriate identification papers) they receive no certificate upon completion. Language differences are also a challenge, especially in Turkey. To alleviate the situation, Syrians have tried to set up schools with support from western (Canada) and Gulf States. At least one religious school was set up. In Antab Syrians worked with the mayor to set up a school for 4 grades offering Turkish language.

Camp conditions vary between the countries but they are dire, especially in the IDP camps: There is a pervasive lack of basic necessities including food, blankets, adequate shelter and services such as basic health care, education and psycho-social support (Zaatari camp in Jordan is notable).

Physical Safety: Fear of sexual harassment and violence: In Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon refugees speak of the fear of sexual harassment and violence in the camps. Anecdotally, the incidences involve the security and civilian camp personnel. The cramped living conditions are also giving rise to sexual abuse. In Jordan where Syrian refugees are more conservative and impoverished, there are anecdotal reports of early marriages of young girls to local Jordanians (to 'protect' them from sexual harassment).

Pressures on men, burdens on women: For many of the men dependency on handouts is intolerable, so they refuse to seek help or collect the supplies. Women have to get the supplies. But for more conservative families, the public exposure of women is a challenge too. This is causing trauma and domestic violence. For widows it is particularly difficult and anecdotally some are opting to marry as the 2nd wife to get male protection. But this is creating new societal problems. Some women household heads and widows may go for days



without food, because they do not feel comfortable and don't have the skills to negotiate assistance.

Political Fear: because there is a mix of people at camps, including members of the government security forces, political activists and those seeking asylum feel unsafe as they fear political infiltration and threats in the camps.

Fear of local police and authorities (risk of harassment and deportation): Because of their precarious residency status fear of deportation and lack of police support, Syrians who are victims of crime or exploitation in host countries (Turkey, Jordan, Iraq etc), rarely report it to the authorities. In addition in Turkey since registration with the authorities limits their freedom of movement, many avoid doing so. But this also makes them more vulnerable.

Health: There is a profound lack of basic health care and other services. In one camp in Jordan, water pollution was so high (the color was red) that the refugees feared for their children's wellbeing. Syrians in Turkey lack health insurance so in cases of serious illness (e.g. cancer) they either go untreated as they cannot afford treatment, or are forced to return back to Syria.

Restrictions on movement - impact on women and men. In camps there are restrictions on the movement of people. To leave the camps, Syrians need a guarantor who is a national of the host country. This creates a new form of exploitation as locals can extort money from the desperate Syrian refugees. Given traditional practices it is typically the men who are able to leave the camps. Women face even greater limitations on movement.

IDP Camps (on the borders): The situation in the IDP camps is dire. Often run by the Free Syrian Army, they are at times subject to bombings and attacks. Atma Camp inside Syria - the last stop before Turkey - is a case in point. Overcrowding is a critical issue with some 17,000 refugees sharing just 1300 tents. There are virtually no toilet facilities (one bathroom for the women), so people have to use the fields. The tents are cold, small and there is a lack of basic necessities including food and blankets. There is no paving and the mud becomes unmanageable with rain and snow. There are no health services or school. Children have died because of the cold and accidental fires. For more information follow the link: <http://www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/ICANSyriaactionbriefJan29Final2.pdf>

Lebanon's top cleric issues fatwa against civil marriage



Lebanon's top Sunni Muslim authority on Monday issued a fatwa against moves to legalize civil marriages inside the country, where couples of different faiths have to travel abroad to tie the knot. The religious edict came a day after President Michel Sleiman tweeted that he would remain steadfast in supporting such unions, while Prime Minister Najib Mikati wrote on his Twitter account that a consensus was required to address the issue.

Grand Mufti Sheikh Mohammed Rashid Qabbani issued the fatwa branding as an apostate any Muslim politician who approves civil marriage legislation.

“Any Muslim with legal or executive authority in Lebanon who supports the legalization of civil marriage is an apostate and outside the religion of Islam,” he said on the website of Dar al-Fatwa, the official institution for fatwas.

“There are predators lurking among us, trying to sow the bacteria of civil marriage in Lebanon, but they should know that the religious scholars will not hesitate to do their duty” and prevent the passage of such a bill.

Qabbani said offenders would not be eligible to be buried in a Muslim cemetery.

Sleiman, a Christian, tweeted that he would “respond to the evolution and aspirations of the people and prepare the appropriate laws for the issue of civil marriage.”

“There are authorities opposed to civil marriage, but this will not sway my convictions or my quest to put the train on the right track,” he said in another tweet.

But after meeting Sleiman on Sunday, Prime Minister Najib Mikati, a Sunni, tweeted in Arabic “the current circumstances do not allow us to address new controversial topics that create divisions.”

He added in English: “I believe that the civil marriage issue cannot be dealt with from a top-down approach.”

The campaign for civil marriage in multi-faith Lebanon, which is considered a liberal Arab country in a conservative region, has gained momentum with a daring initiative to create new jurisprudence.

Kholoud Sukkarieh and Nidal Darwish announced earlier this month they had wed as a secular couple by having their religious sects legally struck from their family registers under an article dating from the 1936 French mandate.

Sleiman has since lobbied for a civil marriage law as a “very important step in eradicating sectarianism and solidifying national unity.”

Despite a long-running campaign by civil groups, civil marriage has no legal basis in Lebanon, a country of around four million people who belong to 18 different religious communities, mainly Christian and Muslim.

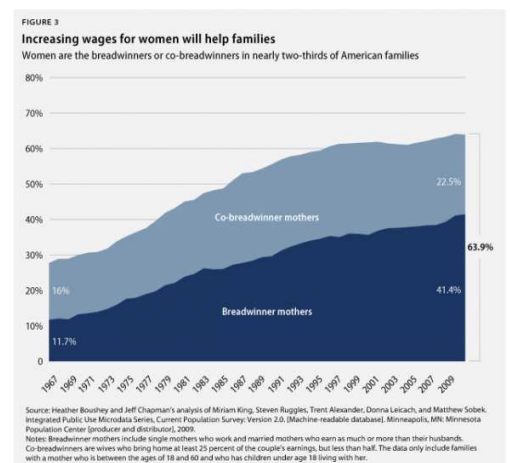
Former president Elias Hrawi in 1998 proposed a similar law, which gained approval from the cabinet only to be halted amid widespread opposition from the country’s religious authorities. Lebanese authorities recognize civil weddings only if they have been registered abroad, and thousands of mixed-faith couples have traveled to nearby Cyprus or Turkey to marry. Most religious faiths have their own regulations governing marriage, divorce and inheritance, and mixed Christian-Muslim weddings in Lebanon are often discouraged unless one of the potential spouses converts. Christian religious authorities have yet to comment on the issue. For more information follow the link

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/01/30/263407.html>

USA - Why the Minimum Wage Is a Women's Issue

According to a report released from the Center for American Progress Action Fund, raising the minimum wage would also be a pillar for women's rights

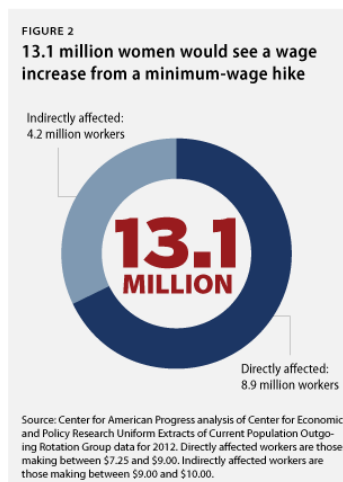
During Tuesday night's State of the Union, President Obama called on Congress to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9 per hour. Not only is the proposal potentially good for business, but, according to a report released Wednesday from the Center for American Progress Action Fund, raising the minimum wage would also be a pillar for women's rights. Here's why, in three charts:



1. Two-thirds of minimum wage earners are women. A disproportionate number of women in the workforce hold the lowest-paying jobs, a fact that contributes to the gender pay gap. This means that women are far more likely to benefit from a wage increase;
2. Families benefit from a wage increase. Sixty percent of women are the primary or co-bread winners in their households. More money in their paychecks means more for their families;
3. Over 17 million women would benefit. The total number of women who would be earning more if Congress approved a minimum wage hike is 13.1 million. 8.9 million of these receive a direct benefit, while another 4.2 million women would enjoy the so-called "spillover effect" of increased wages to keep up with a changing wage structure;

Arguments against the minimum wage - made, within hours of Obama's speech, by Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), and House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) - are predicated on the idea that it would weaken job growth or ruin the economy. In fact, studies show the opposite: that it would strengthen job creation, particularly when unemployment is high, as it is now. To read more about the issue follow the link

<http://portside.org/2013-02-14/why-minimum-wage-womens-issue-three-charts>



RESOURCES & CALLS

BOOKS & REPORTS

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health

Despite progress, child health remains a significant concern throughout the world.

The present report describes the main health issues that affect children. It contains an Analysis of the obligations of States and other duty-bearers with regard to children's right to health, and recommendations to ensure the realization of that right. The report stresses that the survival, protection, growth and development of children in good physical and emotional health are the foundations of human dignity and human rights. Direct link to the report: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session22/A-HRC-22-31_en.pdf

Give Girls a Chance: Tackling Child Labour, A Key to the Future

The global financial crisis could push an increasing number of children, particularly girls, into child labour, according to a new report issued by the International Labour Office (ILO) for the World Day Against Child Labour on June 12.

The ILO report, entitled *Give Girls a Chance: Tackling Child Labour, a Key to the Future* (Note 1), notes that while recent global estimates indicate the number of children involved in child labour has been falling, the financial crisis threatens to erode this progress.

"We have seen some real progress in reducing child labour. The policies chosen in the present crisis will be a test of national and global commitment to take this fight forward." said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia.

The report says the danger of girls being forced into child labour is linked to evidence that in many countries families give preference to boys when making decisions on education of children (Note 2). It states that because of the increase in poverty as result of the crisis

poor families with a number of children may have to make choices as to which children stay in school. In cultures in which a higher value is placed on education of male children, girls risk being taken out of school, and are then likely to enter the workforce at an early age. Other factors which could push up the numbers in child labour include cuts in national education budgets, and a decline in remittances of migrant workers, as these remittances often help to keep children in school.

This year's World Day against Child Labour also coincides with the tenth anniversary of ILO Convention No. 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

"With 169 ratifications we are now just 14 short of universal ratification by our member States" said Mr. Somavia. "It is a remarkable expression of commitment. This Convention calls for special attention to the situation of girls and we want to highlight the particular risks that girls face during this crisis. Protecting girls - and all children - from child labour calls for integrated responses that include jobs for parents, and social protection measures that help them to keep both girls and boys in school. Access to basic education and training for girls and boys must also be part of the solutions for the future."

The ILO report says the most recent global estimate indicated that more than 100 million girls are involved in child labour, and many are exposed to some of its worst forms. Girls face a number of particular problems that justify special attention, including:

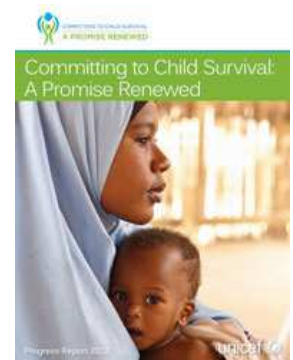
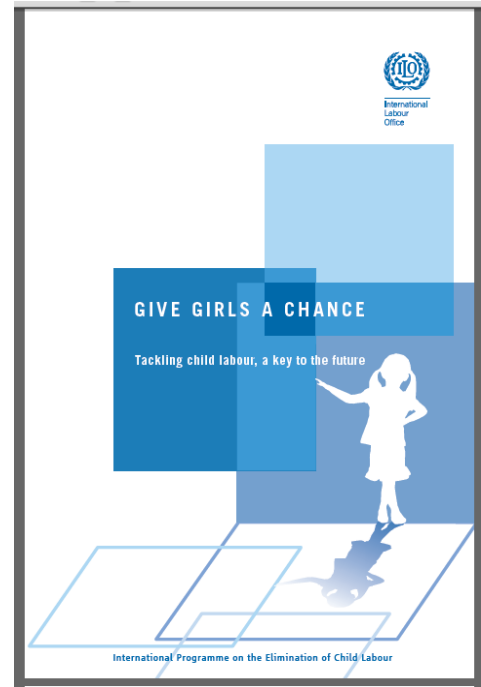
- Much work undertaken by girls is hidden from public view, which creates particular dangers. Girls make up the overwhelming number of children in domestic work in third party households and there are regular reports of the abuse of child domestic workers;
- In their own homes, girls take on household chores to a much greater extent than boys. Combined with economic activity outside the household, this imposes a "double burden" that increases the risk of girls dropping out of school; and,
- In many societies girls are in an inferior and vulnerable position and are more likely to lack basic education. This seriously restricts their future opportunities.

The report highlights the importance of investing in the education of girls as an effective way of tackling poverty. Educated girls are more likely to earn more as adults, marry later in life, have fewer and healthier children and have decision-making power within the household. Educated mothers are also more likely to ensure that their own children are educated, thereby helping to avoid future child labour. To download the full report

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2013/02_13/02_04/020413_ilo.htm

Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed - Progress Report 2012 - Girls

Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed - Progress Report 2012 examines trends in child mortality since 1990, analyses the causes of preventable child death, and outlines strategies to accelerate progress. Child deaths fell from nearly 12 million in 1990 to an estimated 6.9 million in 2011, with reductions in all regions. But reducing that number further will require determined action on the part of governments and partners. Direct

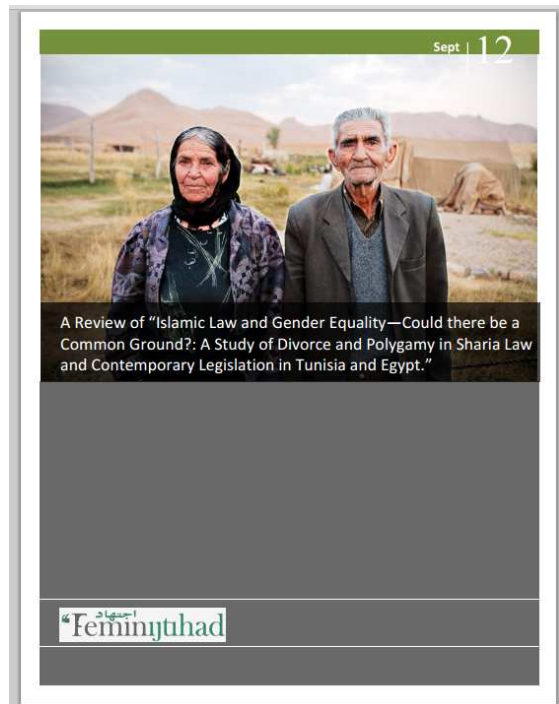


link to the report

http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/APR_Progress_Report_2012_11Sept2012.pdf

Islamic Law & Gender Equality - Divorce & Polygamy in Tunisia & Egypt

This article explores the question of whether there can be a common ground between Islamic law and gender equality. This common ground would serve as a starting point for an in depth analysis of recent legal reforms in family law in both Egypt and Tunisia. Mashhour argues that it is the selective use of Qur’anic teachings, ijtihad (independent juristic reason), and the persistence of cultural and religious patriarchal constructs in many Islamic countries, that has led to a situation in which women’s rights are secondary to men’s. She further explains that Islam granted a number of “revolutionary rights” to women at the time of revelation. These “revolutionary rights” addressed issues such as slavery and alcohol consumption, the imposition of limits on these issues was intended to bring about a gradual prohibition of each. By that same logic, Mashhour argues that the spirit of the Qur’an points towards complete gender equality in a gradual process and that, as in the case of slavery, polygamy was also intended to be progressively eliminated. The author focuses her analysis on an examination of the textual Sharia rulings regarding polygamy and divorce, and compares this theoretical framework with the applied laws in Egypt and Tunisia. Mashhour addresses the case of Tunisia in order to illustrate a liberal model that clearly utilizes shari’ah in a fluid and adaptive way while providing the case of Egypt as an alternative, more traditional model that continues to see shari’ah as a rigid and unchanging jurisprudential body. She concludes that the dynamic nature of Islamic teachings, the evolving character of Sharia, the spirit of Islam towards women’s rights, the principles of justice and public welfare, and the essentiality of feminist ijtihad, all indicate that a common ground could be found between Islamic law and gender equality. Finally, she suggests that a feminist form of ijtihad is needed to improve women’s rights, especially in the case of family law. To read the entire paper follow the link <http://feminijtihad.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/review-islamic-law-and-gender-equality.pdf>



Work and Welfare: Revisiting the Linkages from a Gender Perspective

A number of key assumptions underpin most approaches to the reduction of poverty and inequality (particularly in relation to the developing world): first is the idea that market-led growth is sufficient to create employment and thus raise the incomes of families and individuals, pulling them out of poverty; second, that welfare policies (now widely termed social protection) are able to protect those in need of (short-term) assistance due to contingencies that reduce income and consumption below a basic level; and third, that the reduction of inequalities will follow from growth and poverty reduction.

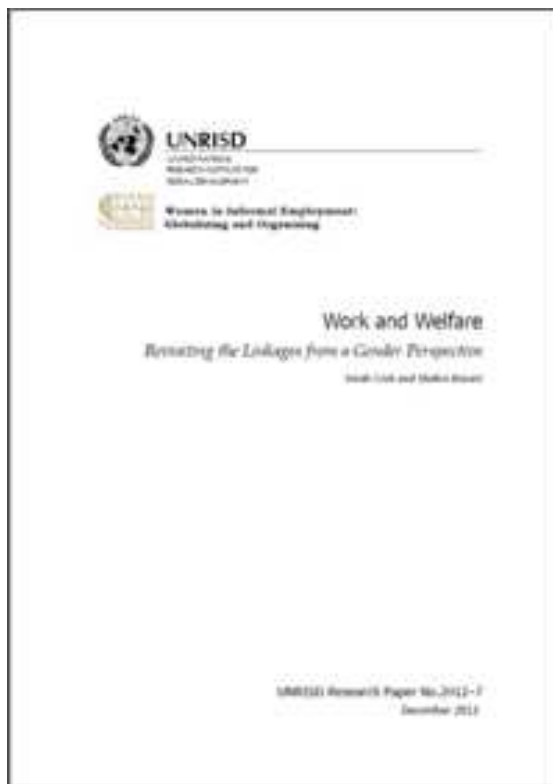
A central flaw in these arguments over the translation of patterns of growth into welfare outcomes concerns their assumptions about the nature of labour markets and employment. Several premises can be questioned: (i) around the nature of work (whether paid or unpaid), and the structure and functioning of labour markets; (ii) the relationship between paid and unpaid work, and between the productive and reproductive economies; and (iii) the links between work and welfare, in particular, whether welfare entitlements are linked to or separate from employment.

A particular set of insights into these relationships comes when analysed through the lens of gender, which is the perspective adopted in this paper.

The different roles of men and women in paid/unpaid work provide an obvious entry point for re-examining arguments about the relationship between work and welfare. Given a gendered division of labour and the gendered nature of institutional arrangements that differentially structure the access of men and women to different opportunities and resources (including employment) in any particular context, labour market outcomes are likely to vary between men and women. Under these circumstances, different labour markets and/or social policies are likely to generate different outcomes for men and women, with implications for welfare outcomes. Assuming or encouraging women's entry into paid work as a basis for welfare improvements and entitlements has implications for: (i) the functioning of labour markets themselves as the supply of labour shifts relative to demand; (ii) the relationship between

the reproductive and productive economies (when the former rely heavily on women's unpaid labour); and (iii) access to welfare, with the risk that employment-based hierarchies and exclusions become replicated and accentuated in social policy. Alternatively, delinking welfare from work creates its own challenges. At a macro level, a particular concern is how to finance welfare programmes if not through high levels of employment; at a micro level, if unpaid work is not valued as "proper" work with adequate compensation and strong entitlements, those undertaking such work (currently predominantly women) are at risk of depending on poorly funded and marginalized components of the welfare system. To read the report:

[http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpPublications\)/F52656072DF9EBB2C1257AD9004657C5?OpenDocument&utm_campaign=ebulletin_30_1_2013&utm_medium=email_html&utm_source=en&utm_content=content_link](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpPublications)/F52656072DF9EBB2C1257AD9004657C5?OpenDocument&utm_campaign=ebulletin_30_1_2013&utm_medium=email_html&utm_source=en&utm_content=content_link)



ANNOUNCEMENTS & CALLS

South Sudan - Women Call for Greater Representation in UN SC Res 1325 Action Plan + "The voices of rural women need to be heard in this 1325 National Action Planning process. We need to make sure that their voices are heard because they are the ones who suffer in the conflict. They will also be the implementors of the NAP." Veronica Anni Michael from Self Help Women Development, a women's organization based in the West Equatorial state commented emphatically during the first national conference on South Sudan's NAP on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security held in Juba, South Sudan from January 29-31, 2013.

The Joint Donor Team for South Sudan in collaboration with Eve Organization for Women Development, the Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare, and UN Women organized the NAP UNSCR 1325 conference. The conference participants representing national and state level CSOs, government ministries and UN agencies identified the pillars of the NAP namely, participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery, as well as the priority issues under each pillar. Sexual and gender-based violence, access to justice, access to education and women's political participation, particularly in constitution building, were some of the issues identified. The importance of the participation of rural women and traditional leaders was also highlighted throughout the conference.

Another key point in the discussion is the need to guarantee financing for the NAP implementation and the need to link NAP financing to the "New Deal," the new aid architecture for post-conflict countries or fragile states. At the moment, South Sudan's NAP process does not have a budgetary allocation. To address this situation, the National Steering Committee for the NAP will explore the formation of an International Consortium composed of donors, international CSOs and UN agencies that will generate quick financial, technical and other forms of support. For the longer term, other financing modalities such as the Multistakeholders Financing Mechanism will be considered.

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Betty Achan Ogwaro and Deputy Minister of Gender and Social Welfare Priscilla Nyanyang Joseph, were two of the high-level officials who attended the national conference. Minister Ogwaro highlighted the role of women's organizations like Eve and GNWP in tirelessly lobbying for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

Following the NAP 1325 national conference, South Sudanese CSOs participated in a NAP strategy session facilitated by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP). The CSO strategy session allowed the South Sudanese CSOs to discuss and reflect on their participation in the NAP process. They came up with additional issues they want reflected in South Sudan's NAP 1325 and 1820 such as protection for peace activists and women human rights defenders; and the need to integrate implementation of women's rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights norms into the NAP 1325. A key output at the CSO strategy session on the NAP 1325 was the [CSO Statement](#) that will be presented to the



South Sudan CSOs demand greater representation in 1325 national action planning
February 12, 2013
By Mavic Cabrera Balleza

"The voices of rural women need to be heard in this 1325 National Action Planning process. We need to make sure that their voices are heard because they are the ones who suffer in the conflict. They will also be the implementors of the NAP." Veronica Anni Michael from Self Help Women Development, a women's organization based in the West Equatorial state commented emphatically during the first national conference on South Sudan's NAP on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security held in Juba, South Sudan from January 29-31, 2013.

The Joint Donor Team for South Sudan in collaboration with Eve Organization for Women Development, the Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare, and UN Women organized the NAP UNSCR 1325 conference. The conference participants representing national and state level CSOs, government ministries and UN agencies identified the pillars of the NAP namely, participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery, as well as the priority issues under each pillar. Sexual and gender-based violence, access to justice, access to education and women's political participation, particularly in constitution building, were some of the issues identified. The importance of the participation of rural women and traditional leaders was also highlighted throughout the conference.

Another key point in the discussion is the need to guarantee financing for the NAP implementation and the need to link NAP financing to the "New Deal," the new aid architecture for post-conflict countries or fragile states. At the moment, South Sudan's NAP process does not have a budgetary allocation. To address this situation, the National Steering Committee for the NAP will explore the formation of an International Consortium composed of donors, international CSOs and UN agencies that will generate quick financial, technical and other forms of support. For the longer term, other financing modalities such as the Multistakeholders Financing Mechanism will be considered.

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Betty Achan Ogwaro and Deputy Minister of Gender and Social Welfare Priscilla Nyanyang Joseph, were two of the high-level officials who attended the national conference. Minister Ogwaro highlighted the role of women's organizations like Eve and GNWP in tirelessly lobbying for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

[Following the NAP 1325 national conference, South Sudanese CSOs participated in a NAP strategy](#)

National Steering Committee on the NAP 1325. The statement outlines CSO contributions to the NAP process and calls for an increase in the number of CSO representatives to the National Steering Committee. Currently, there is only one CSO representative out of the 24 members of the National Steering Committee. To read more follow the link http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=zrdapsdab&v=001e5WobZtxxKSrq1r2hd-NsnhOangJ1Wx8mQsN7Gzh0Fjeb-aFxx2auGliJf7G5sJOc8L13eclfK7_RXXyESkT1NRiHshiHahjhp9d3MQPskNw8SEe0nNNADSJIsHCyqhDwF1iIErVRrCn2l4rHTkjYU1f-wkTtTzU

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