



Gender and Development e -Brief / Issue 111

August 2011

NEWS & ARTICLES

CALLS & STATEMENTS

Call for Family Courts, In Saudi Arabia

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

In Libya

Amidst Conflict, Women Bakers Active for Ramadan
Volunteers helping Benghazi's vulnerable to cope
Civil society breaks through in Libya

In Egypt

Only Women President Nominee
Activists use social media to help slum-dwellers In Egypt

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

In Kuwait

Kuwait University Continues Gender-Biased Admissions

In Egypt

Nawal El Saadawi on the revolution and religious fundamentalisms

In Morocco

Women Call for More Literacy, Equality, Rights + in Morocco

In Yemen

Violence threatens children's health in Yemen

In Syria

Palestinian refugees flee port city camp in Syria
Media Reflect Revolt, Women's Roles, Crisis in Syria

In Palestine

Growing Palestinian displacement in West Bank Area C

In Turkey

Statement on Increasing Violence against Women in Turkey

... STEPS FORWARD

In Lebanon

Penal Code Progress on Honor Killings + Femicide Study in Lebanon

In Sudan

South Sudan Rebuilding Challenges

In Morocco

In Morocco First Woman Taxi Driver

BOOKS & REPORTS

GENDER RIGHTS

Muslim Women's Rights Groups - Important Advocacy - UN Women
Feminism, Gender Equality & The Qur'an

Gender and Development e-Brief receives material from various sources for its publication. Should you wish to refer to these sources/ sites directly, the list includes publications from: AVIVA, www.aviva.org, AWID: www.awid.org, Democracy Digest: www.freedomhouse.org, Development Gateway: www.developmentgateway.org, Dignity: www.dignity.org, e-Civicus: www.civicus.org, Eldis: www.eldis.org, ESCWA: www.escwa.org.lb, GDB: www.developmentex.com, Global Knowledge Partnership: www.globalknowledge.org, IGTN: www.IGTN.org, ILO: www.ilo.org One World: www.oneworld.net, Siyanda: www.siyanda.org, The Daily Star: www.dailystar.com.lb, The Drum Beat: www.comminit.com, The Soul Beat: www.comminit.com, The World Bank: www.worldbank.org, UNDP: www.undp.org, Wicejilist: www.wicej.addr.com, WLP: www.learningpartnership.org; WIDE: www.wide-network.org; IRIN News: www.irinnews.org, Women's UN Report Network: www.wunrn.com, Women Living Under Muslim Laws: www.wluml.org

NEWS & ARTICLES

CALLS & STATEMENTS

Call for Family Courts, In Saudi Arabia

Family courts should be set up in the Kingdom and couples undergo pre-marital counseling to help counter increasing instances of domestic violence and help save marriages. This has been proposed by Dr. Waleed Al-Sadoon, an adviser at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call (Dawah) and Guidance. "This will help curtail family violence cases that have spread in our society." Al-Sadoon also called for a center to be set up to deal with cases involving assault of male and female students. The center should be connected to schools, hospitals and the police, according to Al-Sadoon. "Women should be employed at police stations to deal with women-related cases because many Saudi women are not aware of the laws. They fear the police and hesitate to report violence against them. Moreover, security forces need to develop methods to tackle these cases secretly." A domestic violence study, conducted by Al-Sadoon, has revealed that most victims are not aware of their rights. The study said that the lack of Dawah activists and qualified experts on family violence is hampering efforts to counter this phenomenon. To read more about the study please follow the link:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2011/08_11/08_15/081511_saudi.htm



GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

In Libya

Amidst Conflict, Women Bakers Active for Ramadan

Civil war or not, every year the holy Muslim month of Ramadan must be respected and in Libya's rebel stronghold of Benghazi women bakers are working overtime to meet demand. Dozens of women knead dough into shape, making sweets and salty pies, at the iconic Al-Harabi bakery, undaunted by the unrelenting war, sweltering temperatures, power-cuts and tight budgets. Ramadan, when devout Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, began on August 1. Throughout the month, families are getting together to break the fast with lavish meals that must include olive and cheese



pies and special Ramadan sweets. The revolution launched in February to unseat Libyan strongman Moamer Kadhafi has turned life in Libya upside down. Men, the traditional breadwinners, left for the front line or lost their jobs, universities and schools closed, and businesses and homes were hit by daily power cuts. As a result women have left their homes to look for jobs, with many finding a job at Al-Harabi. To read more about the situation please follow the link:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2011/08_11/08_15/081511_libya.htm

Volunteers helping Benghazi's vulnerable to cope



As conflicting reports come in of rebel advances on the Libyan capital Tripoli, civil society organizations and international NGOs in the rebel capital, Benghazi, are trying to help vulnerable people cope with difficult conditions. At dusk, a group of uniformed Libyan Scouts works discreetly, arranging tables and chairs, putting out trays of pre-packaged meals, rice, meat, milk, fruit, dates, juice and water. The guests arrive, quickly filling up the square: families with children, groups of friends, men sitting quietly on their own. The meal is rapidly consumed. Prayers are said. People leave quickly and the Scouts are put to work again, removing the debris, clearing the tables.

The food is free; its distribution organized by the Scouts in partnership with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and international NGO Mercy Corps. "This is a difficult month for people, particularly in terms of finding food and money," said Tarek, a mechanical engineer and scout leader, supervising the meals. "We are still a long way behind on salaries and the banks are reluctant to pay out much. To read more about Libya's conditions please refer to the link: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=93534>

Civil society breaks through in Libya

Sidelined under Muammar Gaddafi, Libyan civil society organizations are beginning to assume an



important role in helping the most vulnerable in "liberated" areas. "After 42 years of doing the wrong things, people are now doing the right things," said Khaled Ben-Ali, head of the Libyan Committee for Humanitarian Aid & Relief (LibyanAid). Speaking from Benghazi Ben-Ali said he had been overwhelmed by ordinary Libyans' ability to mobilize and organize, starting new organizations from scratch. International NGOs, too, speak with admiration of the "volunteering spirit" shown in Benghazi and other areas administered by the rebel Transitional Council. "I have seen

this in other conflicts, but never with this kind of dimension," a senior health official who preferred anonymity told IRIN. For more information please refer to the link: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=93513>

In Egypt

Only Women President Nominee



In a sea of local press coverage and media appearances of presidential nominees for Egypt's upcoming election, Bothaina Kamel's name is left out. As the country's first woman to nominate herself for Egypt's highest position, she is doing more on the ground than any of her male competitors. The 49-year-old former talk show host is no stranger to breaking social norms of what a woman can and cannot do. A self-proclaimed social democrat, her campaign

motto is simple: "Egypt is my agenda." "I intend to run for [the] presidency in 2011" came her nomination announcement on the micro-blogging website Twitter. Coinciding with the announcement, she changed her profile description to "Journalist, mother & Egyptian presidential candidate." She felt there must be a woman candidate and has been traveling around Egypt since. To know more about the candidate please refer to the link:

http://thewip.net/contributors/2011/08/bothaina_kamel_revolutionary_d.html

Activists use social media to help slum-dwellers In Egypt

A few months ago Mahmoud Salem, aged 30, used to sit at his laptop and join various online forums in a bid to help the effort to overthrow former President Hosni Mubarak. Now, and after Mubarak is gone, Salem is back at his laptop, but this time as an activist of a different sort.



"I was always preoccupied with the political dimension of the Egyptian revolution. Now, however, I am focused on the humanitarian side." Salem told IRIN.

Along with 19 other prominent bloggers in Egypt, Salem is trying to exploit social media for what he sees as positive change, and on 26 July the group launched what is believed to be Egypt's first Twitter fundraising campaign to help slum-dwellers.

Tweetback's first goal was to raise the equivalent of US\$336,700 to improve living conditions in one of Cairo's

worst slums, Ezbet Khairallah, and managed to raise \$218,855 in 10 days, proving that social media can play a positive role to alleviate poverty. For more information please refer to the link:

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=93495>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

In Kuwait

Kuwait University Continues Gender-Biased Admissions

Despite heavy criticism, the Kuwait University is still adamant on retaining its gender-biased admissions policy. The policy sets different standards for university applicants based on their gender. As reported earlier in the Kuwait Times, the policy requires female students to have relatively higher general scores in order to be admitted when compared with male students. In recent updates, nine female students were reportedly refused to be accepted in the majors of medicine and



dentistry, despite scoring high in their first year in university. The students were advised to try other majors. Fayiz Alnashwan, President of the Kuwait Anti-Bias Association said the reasons cited for the refusal of admission in the program was social norms and restrictions, "The students were told that in future, physicians and dentists work long hours and spend long hours in training. So the number of female students accepted is limited. The university does not wish to invest too much in women who will eventually, presumably, not work long hours because of social restrictions," noted Alnashwan.

For more information please refer to :

http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read_news.php?newsid=MTk30TQ2ODQzMg

In Egypt

Nawal El Saadawi on the revolution and religious fundamentalisms



Egyptian feminist writer and activist Nawal El Saadawi on her country's long-awaited revolution and why Egypt still has a long way to go. Watch the video at the Guardian:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/video/2011/jul/25/nawal-el-saadawi-revolution-video>.

In Morocco

Women Call for More Literacy, Equality, Rights + in Morocco

"We have waited enough. Women now are out to say it is time for justice to be made," Safaa Ferradi, a local activist, told IPS. "The great majority of women present in our movement are of



a high cultural and academic level," Rabah Nouami, a local leader of the 20th February movement in Casablanca, told IPS. "It is so honourable to see that most of the spokespersons on behalf of the movement are women. But women are not still influential at the level of decisions within the movement." In spite of the efforts made by the State and by civil society, women remain victims of violence and discrimination. An official study by the government High Planning Commission showed that four forms of violence are still inflicted on Moroccan women - "physical, sexual, psychological, and economic." The new family code in

this country of 32 million people came into effect in 2004. It gave women the right to divorce, to marry without paternal permission, as well a right to alimony in the case of divorce. The new code did not give women equal inheritance rights. For more information:

<http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/news/morocco-arab-spring-proves-arid-for-women/>

In Yemen

Violence threatens children's health in Yemen



Continuing fighting in various parts of Yemen, which has recently displaced thousands of people especially in Abyan Governorate and the Arhab District of Sana'a, could compromise the nutritional status of those affected, especially children, the UN Children's Agency (UNICEF) warns. This, it said, could potentially increase morbidity and mortality rates, especially among children under five. For more info please refer to the link:

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=93532>

In Syria

Palestinian refugees flee port city camp in Syria

Syria should allow humanitarian access to Palestinian refugees living in the Mediterranean port city of Latakia following reports that violence has forced thousands of them to flee a camp in the area. "It is almost impossible to get information out of Syria at the moment. We have no idea where these people are," said Chris Gunness, spokesman for the UN Relief and Works Agency which helps Palestinian refugees across the Middle East (UNRWA). "A forgotten population has now become a disappeared population," Gunness told IRIN on 16 August. "We have no idea where the women and children have gone. This is why we are pushing the Syrian government for



immediate access to the camp to assess the situation there and resume services." To read more about the situation please refer to the link:

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=93517>

Media Reflect Revolt, Women's Roles, Crisis in Syria

When the sun sets and the Muezzin calls for iftar (the break fast), the hours of the holy month of Ramadan--the 30 days of fasting, mercy and forgiveness for observant Muslims--are supposed to begin.



After living in Damascus for a couple of years, having left just this past April, I often enjoyed and observed the byproducts of the month.

In those happier times, families and friends got together for enormous meals after sunset, met in cafes for a hookah or took walks.

People also commonly gathered around a TV set to watch a special Syrian-made Ramadan soap opera that often dared to push the envelope on social conventions.

This year I'm not there. I'm in New York, where I can assume from what I see on the news the mood must be altogether different.

More than 140 people, mostly demonstrators, were killed in Hama on July 31, the first day of Ramadan, and at least 67 in Deir az-Zour, in the east of Syria, on Aug. 7. More than a dozen protesters were killed on Aug. 10.

All told, some 2,000 people have been killed and 15,000 arrested since the revolt's start in mid-March, according to Syrian Observatory, a human rights group. To read the entire story please follow the link http://www.wunrn.com/news/2011/08_11/08_08/080811_syria.htm

In Palestine

Growing Palestinian displacement in West Bank Area C

Palestinians living in Israeli-controlled Area C of the West Bank, where Israel retains controls full control over security, planning and zoning, say they are victims of a deliberate policy by the authorities aimed at their displacement. Each year, hundreds of Palestinians in Area C have their homes demolished by the Israeli authorities because they are unable to obtain permits for their buildings, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Area C covers 60 percent of the West Bank with a Palestinian population of about 150,000.



Israel retains military authority and full control over building and planning in Area C: as much as 70 percent of it is inaccessible to Palestinians, classified as Israeli settlement areas, firing zones, or nature reserves. In the remaining 30 percent there are a number of other restrictions that reduce the possibility for Palestinians to obtain a building permit, reports OCHA. In practice, Palestinian construction is normally permitted only within the boundaries of a plan approved by the Israeli Civil Administration, which covers less than 1 percent of Area C, much of which is already built-up, according to OCHA. To have more information please refer to the link:

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=93522>

In Turkey

Statement on Increasing Violence against Women in Turkey

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is gravely concerned by the increasing violence against women in Turkey. 42% of women and girls in Turkey are systematically subject to violence. The failure of the Turkish state to prevent and respond to this violence is a violation of the right to life.

We stand in solidarity with all Turkish based women's rights advocates and organizations whose work is central to addressing this violence and who today are mobilizing to draw attention to the growing injustice and violence faced by women and girls in Turkey. We join with them in protesting both the state's failure to protect women's fundamental right to life and the annulment of the State Ministry Responsible for Women and the Family. For more information please follow the link: <http://awid.org/News-Analysis/Women-s-Rights-in-the-News2/AWID-Statement-on-Increasing-Violence-Against-Women-in-Turkey>



... STEPS FORWARD

In Lebanon

Penal Code Progress on Honor Killings + Femicide Study in Lebanon

After decades of advocacy by the Lebanese women's movement to abolish the provision of the so-called "honor killing" from the Lebanese law, the Lebanese Parliament voted, on the 4th of August 2011, for the removal of Article 562 from its penal code. Article 562 allowed for a person to benefit from mitigating excuses in the event that this person surprises his/her spouse, sister, or any relative in the act of adultery or unlawful copulation and proceeds to kill or injure one or both of the participants without prior intent. While this is a step forward in

the acknowledgement that such crimes are not to be accepted, much remains to be done on the societal level to change the patriarchal mentality that still puts women under the guardianship of the male family members. For more information please refer to the link:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2011/08_11/08_08/080811_lebanon.htm



In Sudan

South Sudan Rebuilding Challenges

After decades of marginalisation, South Sudanese women may soon be able to lead a normal life now that their country has gained independence and ended years of conflict with North Sudan. In order for Sudanese women to enjoy sustained peace their newly established country requires global (especially African) support to maintain calm, rebuild the economy and improve basic services, particularly for women. Women leaders from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), including from the security sector, are some of the best placed to lend a helping hand to their sisters in South Sudan. Not only do SADC women have experience in rebuilding countries which were once at war, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development - signed by 13 SADC countries and ratified by eight - commits State Parties to put in place measures to ensure that women have equal representation and participation in key decision-making positions

in conflict resolution and peace-building processes by 2015. For more information please follow the link: <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/africa-there-is-a-role-for-sadc-women-in-south-sudan-2011-07-28>



In Morocco

In Morocco First Woman Taxi Driver

She is the first female driver behind the wheel of a grand taxi in Morocco. In Casablanca Fatima Bennadi has become an institution: with colleagues and friends greeting her at every crossroads or at the taxi rank, her white Mercedes is part of the urban landscape. She has been driving it for 20 years, since her husband lost his job, in 1991, and Fatima made up a new life as a taxi driver. Today, aged 66, she is a wife and a mother who spends her time driving her beloved taxicab and shopping at the local markets. She believes in equal rights for men and women. "I don't like bearded men - she states, referring to Islamic fundamentalists - who think women should stay home doing nothing all day. To read the entire story please refer to the link: http://www.parallelozero.com/visual_rep.php?cod=510

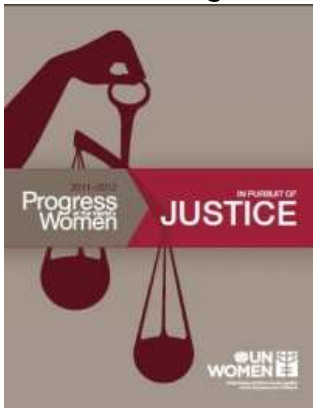


BOOKS & REPORTS

GENDER RIGHTS

Muslim Women's Rights Groups - Important Advocacy - UN Women

The United Nations recently established [UN Women](#) to champion gender equality and empowerment of women. In its first major report "[Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice](#)," UN Women highlights both the global plight of women seeking justice and the amazing progress women have made in the past century. Particularly enlightening aspects of the report are the coverage of women in Muslim countries and the accomplishments of Muslim women's rights groups.



Released in the wake of the Arab Spring, the report emphasizes the active role Arab and Muslim women are taking in effectuating historic change in the region, invalidating the stereotypical view that Muslim women are voiceless and meek. As media coverage of the revolution in Egypt revealed, many Egyptian NGOs that have long advocated for political, social and economic change are organizations run by women. The UN Women's report highlights similar NGOs that exist in many other Muslim countries and showcases examples of the groundbreaking work being done by these organizations under the direction of women. The report discusses the impact of the dedication and activism of women in

the Muslim world through personal stories and statistics. To read the report plz follow the link: http://www.wunrn.com/news/2011/08_11/08_01/080111_muslim.htm

Feminism, Gender Equality & The Qur'an

There have been numerous tafsirs throughout the ages, but few stressed on the gender equity issues as propounded by the Qur'an. Many exegetes failed to distance themselves from the misogynist views prevalent in their society while endeavoring to interpret God's words. Their exegeses are so deeply embedded in the minds of the Muslims nowadays and considered to be the ultimate truth at any other forms of interpretation are considered non-conformist or worse, heretical. It has to be understood that all the previous exegetes approached the Qur'an with their reason, explaining the purport of each Qur'anic statement in the light of their knowledge of the Arabic language and the traditions of the Prophet apart from the knowledge they acquired historically and culturally. Hence naturally there will exist differences among the exegetes in understanding



certain verses as those of their predecessors. Such differences should not be viewed with contempt but in actual fact proved the relativity inherent in all human reasoning. Such differences of opinions are the basis of all progress in human thinking and the most potent factor in man's acquisition of knowledge. For more information please follow the link: http://www.wunrn.com/news/2011/08_11/08_15/081511_feminism.htm

Gender And Development E-Brief is published by **CRTD.A**.

To get all previous GAD e-brief issues please log on to: <http://www.iris-lebanon.org/arabic/inner/ebrief.htm>

For more information about **CRTD.A** please visit: <http://crt-da.org.lb>

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a member of **CRTD.A** / IRIS.

Please direct any comments to rchemaly@crt-da.org.lb

If you choose to unsubscribe please send a blank e-mail from the e-mail in which you receive the e-Brief from, with the heading unsubscribe to unsubscribe-brief@crt-da.org.lb

If you wish to subscribe please send a blank e-mail, with subscribe as a heading to subscribe-brief@crt-da.org.lb

All the available links were accessible during the preparation process

Please accept our apologies if your subscribe / unsubscribe needs are not being met to your satisfaction, as errors will inevitably occur

Opinions and views expressed in this GAD E-Brief relate to their respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of **CRTD.A**

Information presented in this GAD E-Brief is considered public information and may be distributed or copied. Use of appropriate credit is requested. While **CRTD.A** makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information, various data such as contacts, weblinks, dates, etc. may change.

CRTD.A provides no warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of the data and information harvested from other public sources.

Some of the information in this GAD E-Brief may contain references to information created and maintained by other organizations. Please note that **CRTD.A** does not control and cannot guarantee the timeliness, or accuracy of these outside materials.
