

MENA Women News Brief

April 26, 2016-May 10, 2016

Algeria

May 5: Algeria, Jordan collaborate to increase women in parliament

“Algerian Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women’s Affairs, Mounia Meslem highlighted Wednesday, May 4, in Amman (Jordan), Algeria’s efforts in boosting women’s representation within the Parliament, which earned it the title of pioneer on the Arab scene.” ([Al Bawaba](#))

Bahrain

May 9: Bahrain Says It Will Release Prominent Female Activist

“Bahrain's Foreign Ministry said Monday, May 9 that a prominent female activist will be released after spending nearly two months in prison. The ministry said in a statement on its website that Zainab al-Khawaja is being released on humanitarian grounds because of her one year-old son, who was permitted to be with her in prison in a dedicated ward for new moms. It referred to her as a foreign national despite the fact that she has dual Danish-Bahraini citizenship.” ([ABC News](#))

Egypt

April 29: What Do Egyptian Women Aspire to Become? (Op-Ed by Aya Nader)

“In the political and cultural tumult of present-day Egypt, understanding how different groups in society work and respond is crucial. Women in Egypt are the heads of 12.9 percent of Egyptian households, and make a majority of household spending decisions, but are politically under-represented. In order to imagine how women of tomorrow in the country will look, Nielsen conducted research into the present factors that drive their decisions in life.” ([Egyptian Streets](#))

Iran

April 29: It’s not enough to speak up for refugee women. We have to listen to them too **Op-Ed by Saba Vasefi**

“Often fleeing from places where women are considered less than men, refugee and asylum seeking women find themselves doubly marginalized in western nations – and often by those claiming to speak up for them.” ([The Guardian](#))

May 1: Iran elections: Rouhani notes record 6 percent women elected

“The president of Iran has congratulated voters on electing a record number of women to parliament since before the 1979 Islamic revolution. It was President Hassan Rouhani's first reaction to the results of Friday’s April 29 run-off election, in which moderates and reformists won a working majority. The 17 women elected make up 6 percent of the new cohort of 290 MPs.” ([BBC](#))

May 2: Female Journalist, Sentenced to Ten Years, Beaten in Iran Prison

“The mother of imprisoned newspaper columnist Afarin Chitsaz will make a judicial complaint to protest the beating of her daughter in prison. Maryam Azadpour, who recently broken her silence on Chitsaz’s case, described her daughter’s ordeal in an interview with the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran.” ([International Campaign For Human Rights in Iran](#))

Iraq

April 27: Women aim to bring ISIS to justice with their stories of captivity, torture and daring escape (Op-Ed by Elizabeth Schaeffer Brown)

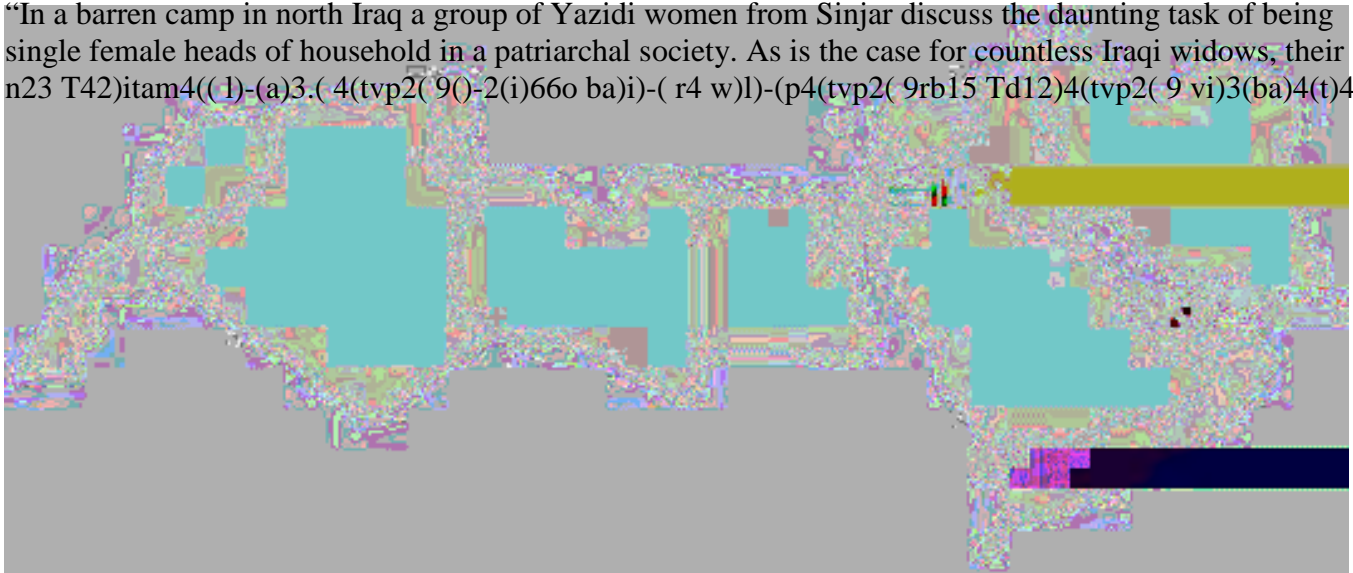
“In late August of 2015, I travelled to Kurdistan with a small group led by the former Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo. Determined to help the Yazidis prosecute ISIS for genocide in the International Criminal Court, we gathered in a conference room in Dohuk, a small city 74 kilometers from ISIS-held Mosul, and we prepared to record testimony from women who had been held captive by ISIS and later escaped.” ([New York Times](#))

May 4: Iraq’s all-female combat unit seeks revenge on Islamic State

“When Islamic State swept into the northern Iraqi town of Sinjar in 2014, a few young Yazidi women took up arms against the militants attacking women and girls from their community. ‘They took eight of my neighbors and I saw they were killing the children,’ Yazidi female fighter Asema Dahir, age 21, told Reuters last month at a checkpoint near a front line north of Mosul.” ([Reuters](#))

May 7: Widowed by ISIS: Yazidi Women Find Strength in Motherhood

“In a barren camp in north Iraq a group of Yazidi women from Sinjar discuss the daunting task of being single female heads of household in a patriarchal society. As is the case for countless Iraqi widows, their



Libya

May 3: Public-Private Partnerships for Jobs in Libya are Key for Youth and Women, Now More Than Ever

“Establishing a public-private partnership contracting system for entrepreneurship and job placement could provide the incentives needed to stimulate job creation in the private sector. Targeting semi-skilled youth, ex-combatants, and women is viewed to be of the utmost importance.” (The World Bank)



Syria

May 2: How Syrian women are gaining new confidence in Turkish refugee camp **(Op-Ed by Brenda Stoter)**

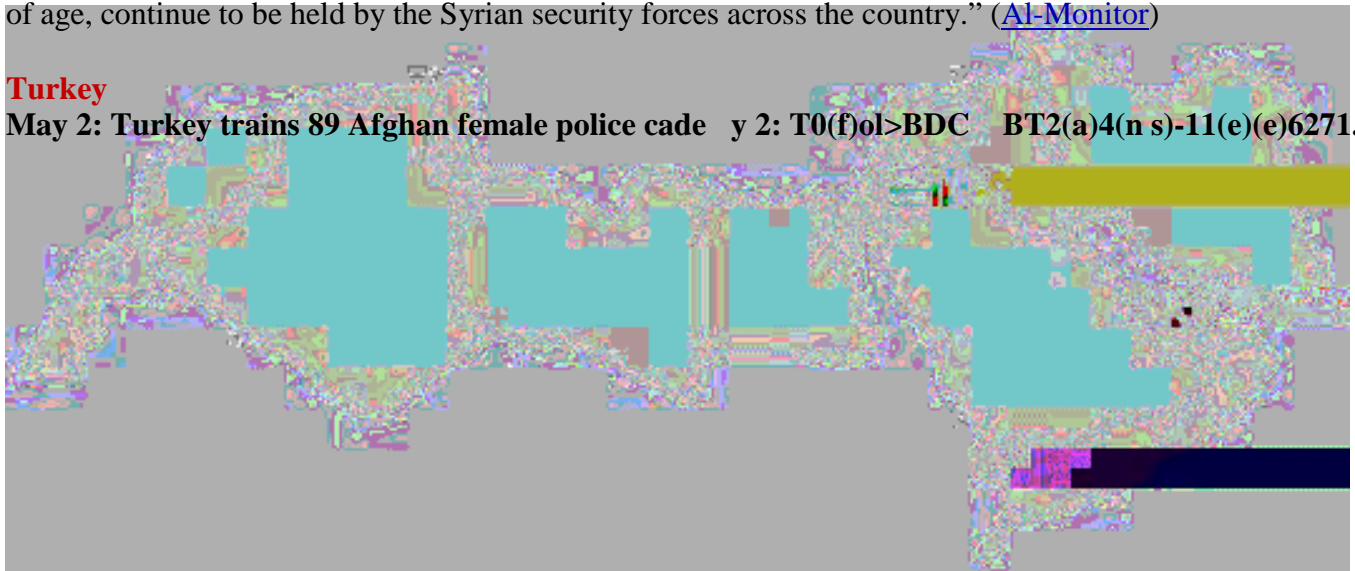
“Syrian women who take part in craft workshops in Islahiye refugee camp learn new skills, earn some extra money and above all find a place of support. When Maysa fled from Idlib to Turkey more than four years ago, she thought she would live in the refugee camp in Islahiye close to the Turkish-Syrian border only for a short period. But as the war raged on in Syria, the days turned into years.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

May 8: Syria’s women prisoners face suffering even after release

“Ever since the start of the Syrian revolution in mid-March 2011, the Syrian regime's security forces have spared no effort to arrest peaceful protesters who called for the downfall of the regime. Their waves of arrest were not limited to men; they also included hundreds of women and girls who opposed the Syrian regime. According to a joint report issued by the Syrian Network for Human rights (SNHR) and the Syrian Center for Statistics and Research, 2,850 women, 120 of whom are girls below 18 years of age, continue to be held by the Syrian security forces across the country.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

Turkey

May 2: Turkey trains 89 Afghan female police cadets y 2: T0(f)ol>BDC BT2(a)4(n s)-11(e)(e)6271.32 /P <<



[\(Khaleej Times\)](#)

Yemen

May 8: Yemeni women urge warring parties to reach peaceful solution

“A group of leading Yemeni figures held warring Yemeni parties accountable for not reaching a permanent peaceful solution yet; nonetheless, they encouraged them to set-aside their personal interest and have a sense of responsibility to bring back peace to the country.” ([Kuwait News Agency](#))

General

May 10: The changing face of women’s political participation in the Middle East **(Op-Ed by Vickie Langohr, Marc Lynch, and Lauren Baker)**

“The barriers to women’s political participation in the Middle East have long preoccupied scholars and analysts. The Arab uprisings of early 2011 disrupted virtually every dimension of Arab politics and societies, forcing a systematic reevaluation of many long-held political science theories and assumptions. The place of women in politics and the public sphere was no exception.” ([The Washington Post](#))

By Elena Scott-Kakures, Middle East Program

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