

# **MENA Women News Brief**

**December 15, 2015-January 5, 2016**

## **Egypt**

### **December 16: Female members aim to form parliamentary bloc**

“Several newly elected female members of parliament are planning to form a coalition for women inside the parliament, stressing that the women’s bloc aims to support the women’s experience in the parliament. Seventy-three women managed to secure parliamentary seats in the elections held over the past two months.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

### **December 19: Marital rape: Women between fear of reporting and weak legislation**

“Noura Mohamed, the manager of a program aiming to combat violence against women at the Centre of Egyptian Women’s Legal Assistance (CEWLA), recounted the story of a woman who was raped by a husband, who took her income and defamed her, spreading rumors about her ‘questionable morality.’ Mohamed said that in many cases as these, the main role of the program to combat violence against women is to provide social, psychological, legal, and financial support to women who suffer from physical abuse.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

### **December 21: Women-only buses introduced in Egypt for first time**

“Egypt has for the first time introduced women-only buses in the Nile Delta city of Damanhour, with officials saying the move is not to combat sexual harassment as assumed by many. ‘The governorate has received complaints from women in the past weeks that they were unable to use public transportation, especially during rush hours,’ says El-Sayed, explaining that women were often physically unable to reach the bus doors due to men pushing their way onto the buses.” ([Ahram Online](#))

### **December 24: 26-year-old female MP has big plans for Egypt’s new parliament**

“Following her victory in the recent Egyptian parliamentary elections, Sarah Saleh, 26, became the youngest parliament member in the history of the South Sinai governorate. In an interview with Al-Monitor, she noted that while her age was the biggest obstacle she faced, she managed to transform it into one of the driving forces of her victory.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **December 25: Egypt launches anti-female genital mutilation plan**

“Egypt has launched a five-year plan to reduce [EMC 9 964(c-4( a f)-68 )(u)- 0 0 (ed) .(004 Tc 0.c2a9 960 0 12 54

(Gulf News

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### **December 28: Egypt: Women's Achievements in 2015 - Presiding Judges and Elected Parliamentarians**

“The year 2015 witnessed a number of achievements for women, the highlight of which was the swearing-in of new female judges and the unprecedented presence of female parliamentarians in the upcoming parliament with 73 elected members.” (

**December 28: Egyptian Women Face Violence, Media Abuse and Exclusion From Senior Positions in 2015**

“Egyptian women suffered losses on several fronts in 2015, which was particularly evident in the continuation of violence and sexual harassment, as well as the inequality faced with regards to assuming senior administrative positions and getting appointed to the state's legal institutions.” ([All Africa](#))

**December 28: Will Egypt's schools break sex education taboo?**

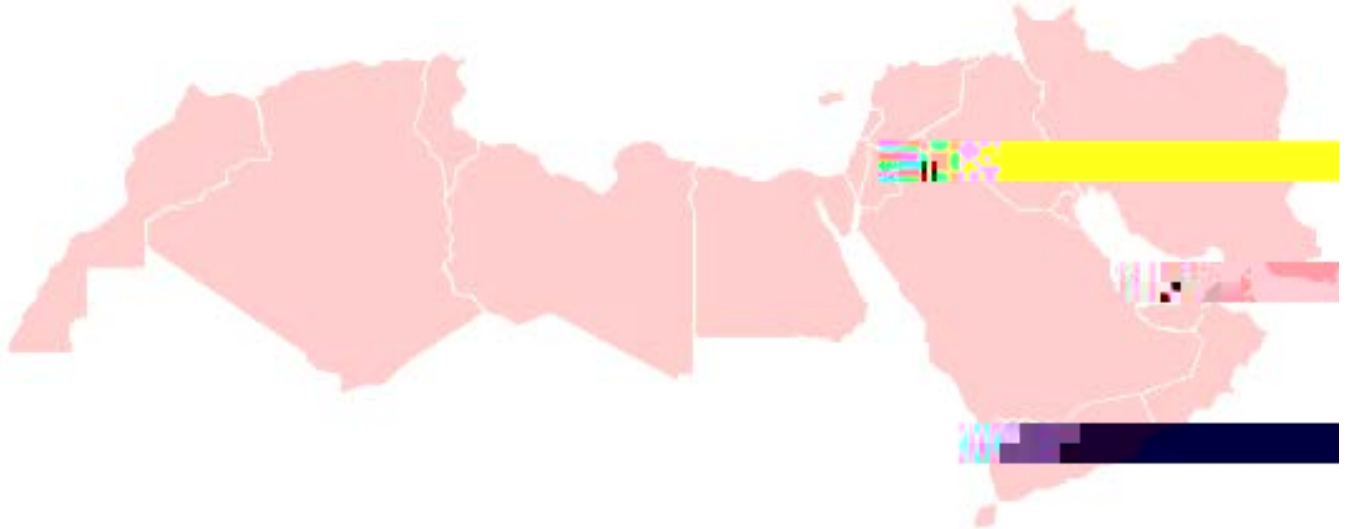
“On the first day of the UN Women’s annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence campaign that began Nov. 25, a school-based sex education effort titled ‘Sexual education: a need, not a luxury’ was launched to serve as an introduction to address violence against women in particular, in light of the misconceptions in Egyptian society where sex education is equated with teaching young men to have sex.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

**Iran**

**December 15: Iran seizes thousands of cars for women's veil offences**

“Iran has impounded tens of thousands of cars since March because women inside the vehicles had not properly covered their hair with a headscarf, Tehran’s traffic police said Tuesday, December 15. ‘Over the past eight months, more than 40,000 cases of bad hijab have been dealt with,’ said Brigadier General Teymour Hosseini, quoted by ISNA news agency.” ([AFP via](#)





## **Qatar**

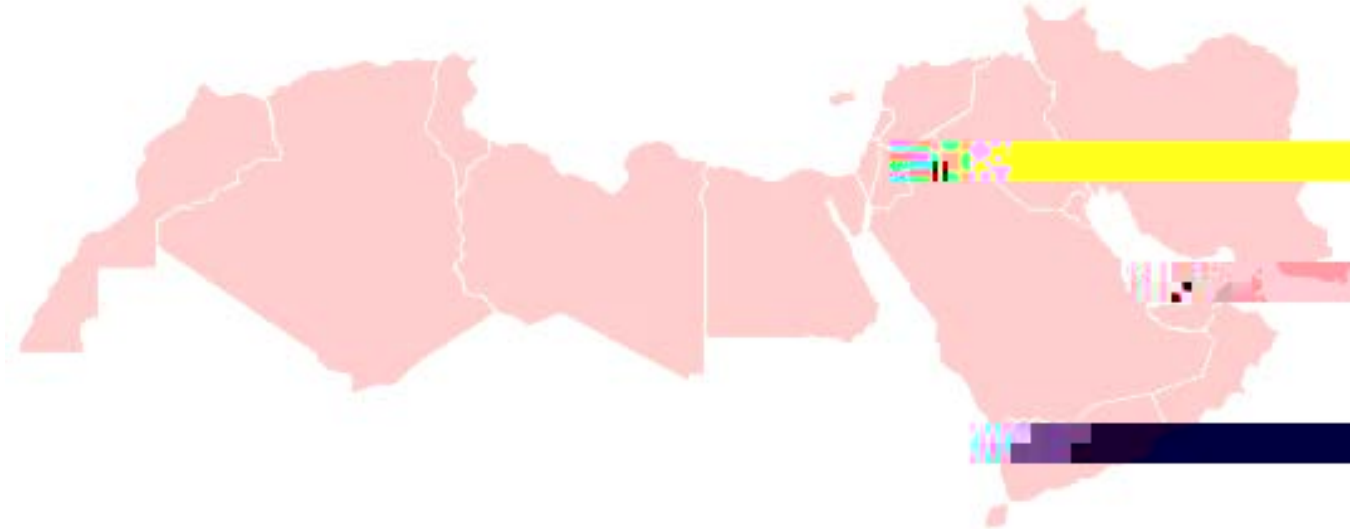
### **December 31: Qatar calls for more female taxi drivers**

“Qatar’s Central Municipal Council (CMC) has called for more female taxi drivers to meet high demand, Doha News reported. The council has urged state-run transportation company, Mowasalat, to expand a female taxi driver service to facilitate a safe and comfortable way for women to get around the country. According to CMC member, Nasser Ibrahim Mohamed Issa Al Mohannadi, the move would help women feel more secure, avoid bullying, and evade harassment.” ([Arabian Business](#))

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **December 18: Saudi’s first women councilors get media exposure**

“Since their historic election last week, some of Saudi Arabia's first-ever female politicians have been propelled from near-anonymity into the glare of the media spotlight. Several of the 20 new female councilors have already appeared on TV, and in magazines, newspapers and the online press, and are quickly having to adjust to the un(r)-7(e)4(z)-6(i)-10(I)20 Tc 0 Tw Tl((V)2(o78)80 Tw co78)84( )JTJ teTt(V.1,2E



**December 29: 23 Saudi women on trial over terrorism charges**

“Twenty-three Saudi women accused of association with Al-Qaeda and Daesh (so-called IS) are currently being tried in the Kingdom. Some of them have been convicted and jailed. According to

