

# **MENA Women News Brief**

**February 16, 2016-March 1, 2016**

## **Bahrain**

### **February 27: Equal Opportunities Unit convenes**

“[Bahrain’s] Equal Opportunities Unit at the Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Ministry’s Municipalities Affairs has approved its bylaw and the 2016 action plan in line with its keenness on consolidating women’s social and functional roles.” ([Bahrain News Agency](#))

## **Egypt**

### **February 18: Egyptian women launch “One Girl is Worth 100” campaign**

Rania Ayman, a founding member of the campaign “One Girl is Worth 100,” speaks to Al-Monitor about women who struggle to make a living in jobs traditionally limited to men. “‘One Girl is Worth 100’ is a project undertaken by a group of female activists who shed light on the struggles of women with onerous or hazardous jobs. The group's objective is to affirm that these jobs are not limited to men and that there are some women who are much more successful than men.” ([Al Monitor](#))

### **February 27: Egyptians call for end to female genital mutilation after surgeon’s ban**

“Earlier this week, the Disciplinary Court in the Nile Delta province of Mansura revoked the medical license of Raslan Fadl, months after he was convicted of manslaughter in the death of Suheir Al Bataa due to complications blamed on FGM surgery he performed on the 13-year-old. The court also ordered

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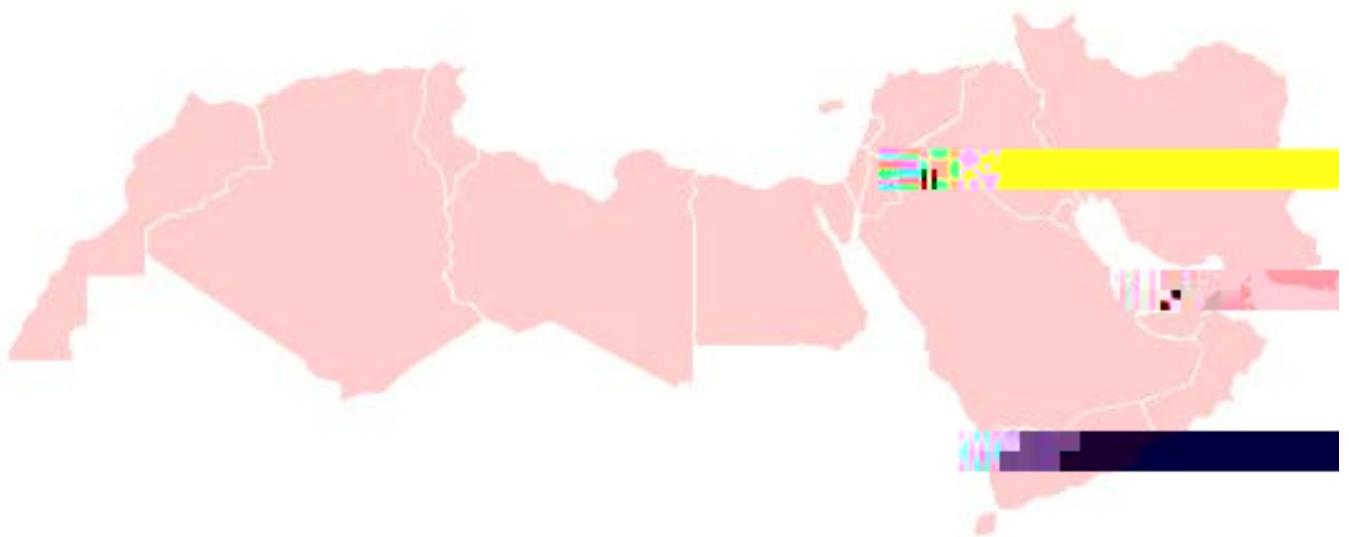
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her show. Reham Saeed was sentenced to a year in jail for the interview, in which she suggested a sexual harassment victim deserved her fate. Her guest had uploaded footage to Facebook of an assault by her harasser after police failed to prosecute him.” ([BBC News](#))

## **Iran**

### **February 19: More than an ornament: Iran's 'female statesmen' and elections (Op-ed by Farnoosh Amirshahi)**

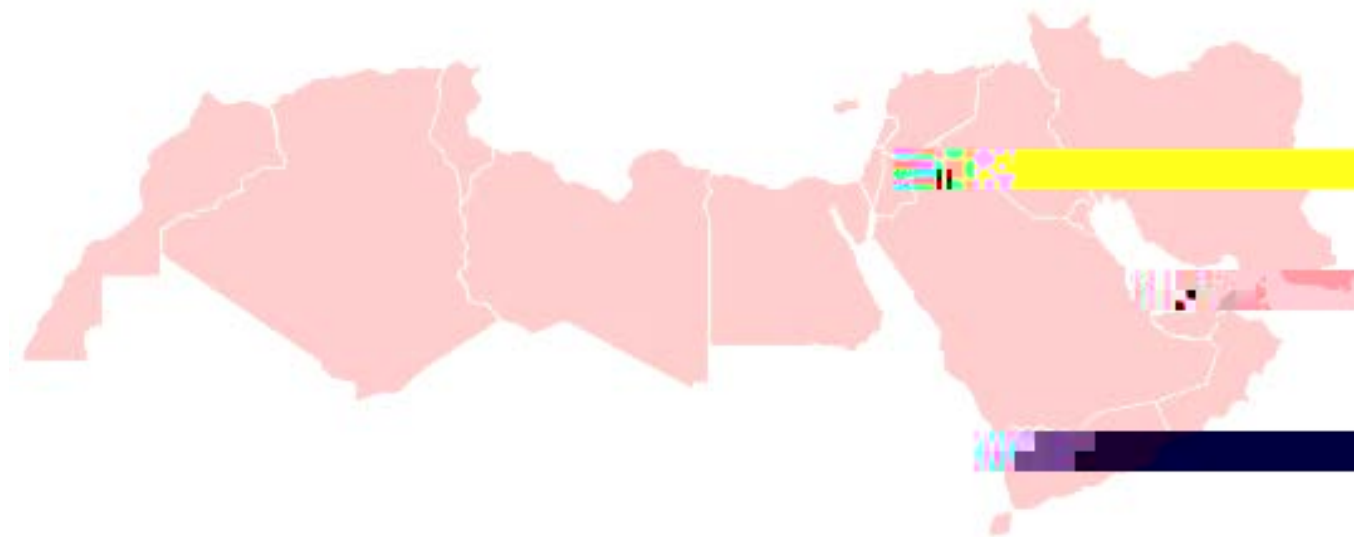
“Traditionalist clerics often invoke a masculine term to discourage women from running for political office in Iran. While the question of gender isn’t addressed in Iran’s electoral laws, candidates wishing to participate in the Iranian political scene must be considered ‘Rajol-e-siasi,’ or statesmen. If the political arena is legally defined as the purview of statesmen, women have no business entering it, conservatives argue.” ([The Guardian](#))



opportunity law and rulings by the High Court of Justice. Only the team's coordinator is a woman.”  
([Haaretz](#))

**February 29: Protesters disturb women's prayer service at Western Wall**

“A women's prayer service at the Western Wall was disturbed by protesting haredi Orthodox men and women. The Original Women of the Wall group held morning services on Monday, February 29 using a small Torah scroll that they smuggled in for the service. The more than 20 women were wearing prayer shawls and phylacteries. According to a statement issued by the group, the prayers were 'brutally disturbed' by sever, Feahan 20 ar.680( s)t04 Tc 0.004 T 0d”



their quality of life, thereby reducing the possibility of extremism and terrorism. These measures include establishing micro-credit programs, increasing the enrollment of girls in primary schools, and creating ways to better living through work in garment factories.” ([Morocco World News](#))

## **Oman**

### **February 21: Tourism sector in Oman needs more women leaders**

“Creation of job opportunities for women is the ministry’s vision and mission, according to Maitha bint Saif Al Mahrouqi, undersecretary of the Ministry of Tourism. ‘Only 26 per cent of women work in Oman’s tourism industry. Women’s leadership in the tourism sector is very important and there is an urgent need to attract more Omani women at various professional levels,’ said Al Mahrouqi.” ([Times of Oman](#))

## **Palestinian Territories**

### **February 22: In Gaza, Bicycles Are a Battleground for Women Who Dare to Ride**

“Many Palestinians frown at the idea of women bicycling in public because men might inappropriately leer at their legs moving up and down or ogle their bottoms. Female cyclists are a fairly unusual sight throughout the Arab world. The women of a small cycling club, who began riding together in December, are the first in years to pedal publicly in Gaza, where the nearly decade-long rule of the Islamist Hamas movement has been accompanied by various initiatives to restrict the modest efforts of women hoping to practice sports.” ([New York Times](#))

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **February 23: Saudi puts 26 women on trial for ‘terror activities’**

“As many as 26 women accused of ‘terror activities’ are being tried by the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh and no special privileges have been given to them, Mansoor Al-Qaffari, spokesman of the Ministry of Justice, has said. ‘The women are being tried under the same procedures as male suspects and are given complete privacy and rights guaranteed by the law,’ he said.” ([Saudi Gazette](#))

### **February 25: The oil crisis makes a compelling case for women's equality in Saudi Arabia (Op-ed by Belinda Palmer)**

“The lowering of oil prices should serve as a resounding clarion call for a nation that needs to plan for a near-future in which oil wells are drying up. It is time to drill into a far richer well, that of talented, modern women. A well that need never run dry.” ([The Guardian](#))

### **February 29: When Saudi women rise to meet armed forces’ needs**

“If women have their own major role to play while a nation is at war, the women in Saudi Arabia is certainly not behind. This is what was at display during a recently held Armed Forces Exhibition for Diversification (AFED) where the women of the Kingdom made their presence felt not just in terms of job nationalization efforts, but also their readiness to actively participate in the area of military requirements.” ([Arab News](#))

### **February 29: 350,000 Saudi women are employed in the private sector**

“Recent statistics from the Ministry of Labor show that the Saudi private sector employed more than 350,000 women at the end of 2015, and the figure is expected to reach 450,000 by the end of 2016, a local publication reports.” ([Arab News](#))

**Syria**

**February 16: Syrian women hope to join Turkey's textile industry**

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