

# MENA Women's News Brief

January 20-27, 2014

The Middle East Program is delighted to announce that it will provide information on the activities of the Middle East Program in the area of women's rights and gender equality.

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## Iran

### January 21: Iranian women warned about wearing chador

Reformist clergyman and former Iranian Vice President Mohammad Ali Abtahi told Al-Monitor, 'From an Islamic standpoint, we as members of the clergy are to preach the right [path]. That's all. We are not to pursue people's behavior, nor should we attempt to correct it through publicly condemning it.' He told Al-Monitor, 'Chador is an Iranian option of coverage, and choosing to wear it or opting out does not define people's religious beliefs. It's simply like any form of dress. But what makes this a sensitive issue is that since hijab is mandatory in Iran, less coverage is interpreted as resisting the regime. And that's why all hell breaks loose when it comes to women's hijab.' Iraq

### January 21: Iraqi women mostly absent from political scene

'Despite some gains made in recent decades, Iraqi women remain largely absent from the country's political scene.' MP Aliya Nussayif said, 'There is a lot of injustice against women in the executive branch. If it were not

women are employed, similar to rates in Arab countries in the Middle East, compared with 70 percent for the general female population in Israel (Bloomberg)

## Morocco

### January 21: Arab women encouraged by Arab Spring: Activists

“Forty activists and women rights experts from Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Yemen attended the training organized by Karama, a regional NGO, in collaboration with the UN Fund for Gender Equality, in order to share experiences and open a dialogue about advancing women emancipation and rights in their own countries (Al-Ahram)

### January 23: Morocco: Amendment of Rape Provision Is a Step in the Right Direction

“Today's vote is a welcome step but Morocco still needs a comprehensive strategy to protect women and girls from violence, with input from women's rights groups who have been excluded from the process so far, Hassiba Hadj Saboui, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa took 16-year-old Amina Filali's suicide and nearly two years for the parliament to close the loophole that allowed rapists to avoid accountability. It's time to have laws that protect survivors of sexual abuse (f.s 5 0 T(o)1 0 Tdca.)

the supply into Syria of weapons and armed militants, and to stop exporting terrorism to Syria via neighboring countries.”