

MENA Women's News Brief

January 28 - February 10, 2014

Bahrain

February 4: Women drivers 'could be forced to remove veils'

Muslim women could be forced to remove their face veils during routine stops by traffic police in Bahrain. [However] General Directorate of Traffic legal affairs chief Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Buqais said the decision to give police the powers to make women remove their veils would be impossible in practice. ([Trade Arabia](#))

February 10: Women's rights in the spotlight

Bahraini women have been facing new types of violence and discrimination since the unrest broke out according to a key report compiled by a government organization. ([Gulf Daily News](#))

Egypt

January 30: Egyptian woman attacked in Tahrir Square as police clash, lynch

On the anniversary of Egypt's Day of Rage, an Egyptian woman is subjected to the same police brutality as her fellow citizens revolted against three years ago. ([As-Sayid](#))

February 2: Introducing Egypt's new superhero: Qahera, fighting evil from misogyny

Islamophobia

Qahera, a new web-based comic heroine who fights social problems affecting women in Egypt, is on a mission to combat misogyny and Islamophobia, among other things, said comic designer Deena Mohamed, whose work is presented in Arabic and English. ([Al-Sharq](#))

February 3: Sexual harassment leads Egyptian women to martial arts

The Soft Tahrosh (I Saw Harassment) movement in Egypt has launched campaigns that teach women how to defend themselves, following a steep rise in sexual harassment. ([Al-Monitor](#))

Iran

February 2: Iranian women fight efforts to restrict travel abroad

On November 19, 2013, the parliament passed a bill [that] required single women to obtain a notarized permit from their father or male guardian each time they were to depart the country. The new requirement angered many women, women's rights activists and even a few female parliament members. (

Israel

January 27: Study Israel should encourage employment of Arab women

According to a new study, this year the Israeli economy will lose at least 1.6 billion shekels [\$460 million] because it has not invested in past years in supporting [female] employment in the Arab sector. This relates only to an increase in the participation of Arab women in the workforce, does not include those who do not calculate taxes and savings allowances. [Al-Monitor](#)

February 4: Orthodox feminist group breaks ranks in Women of the Wall

The Israeli Orthodox feminists' organization has joined forces with a group of dissenters within Women of the Wall, the multid denominational women's prayer group, in voicing fierce opposition to a new government that would effectively prevent women from praying [restriction] at the women's section of the Western Wall. [Haaretz](#)

Kuwait

February 1: Kuwait against all forms of discrimination against women - MPs

Two members of the Kuwait National Assembly Dr. Khalil Abdullah Ali and Faisal Mohammed Al-Kandari on Saturday called for helping Arab women to gain their political rights and ending all forms of discrimination against them. [KUNA](#)

Lebanon

February 7: Arab women in media, marketing lean in'

Career-minded women in marketing and communications are finding increasingly welcoming corporate environments in the Middle East. [Daily Star Lebanon](#)

Morocco

February 1: Morocco takes a stride forward for mothers and children

Morocco is one of the 9 countries in WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region to have adopted a national plan to accelerate progress on maternal and child health over the past year... Morocco's maternal mortality rate fell 67% between 1990 and 2010, and the infant mortality rate by 60% between 1990 and 2011. The new plan aims to bring about even faster progress. It sets the country on course to achieve a 50% reduction in maternal mortality of 70% and 82%, respectively, from the 1990 levels by 2015. [Organizations](#)

February 5: Moroccans call for 'no tolerance' of violence against women

A campaign of "no tolerance" for violence against women was launched in Morocco by women's groups pressing the government to take greater action... These include guaranteeing equal access to employment, criminalizing all forms of violence against women, including marital violence, protecting women in public places, and creating units to monitor the abuse of women's rights. [AFP](#)

February 9: Morocco's inheritance dilemma

Attempts at reforming the inheritance law in Morocco, which favors males over females, has been met with staunch opposition from Islamic scholars and Moroccan citizens. [Al-Mizan](#)

Oman

February 10: 8.3% of Omani households headed by women

Of the number of women heading their families, 45 percent are widows, 19 percent divorced, 28 percent are single and eight percent were single. According to the study, married women head their households because of the husband's disability or their inability to work or because the husband works in a different city. [Masalah Daily](#)

Palestinian Territories

February 5: In a newly confined Palestinian village, a feminist awakening

Barakat's Women's Association has grown since 2010 to include 50 women from Nabi Samwil and the villages. Instructors come in from the West Bank and Jerusalem to teach agriculture and food production. The women recently sold locally produced baked goods to a visiting group of Arab schoolchildren from East Jerusalem. [The Times of Israel](#)

Qatar

February 3: Young Arab women leaders' conference to be held in Qatar

The Arab International Women's Forum will hold its Young Arab Women Leaders: The Voice of the Future conference in Doha this spring. This will be an opportunity for young women who aspire to be business, community and political leadership to meet prominent woman business leaders from Qatar and the region alongside representatives from governments, leading business organizations and environmental organizations. [Gulf Times](#)

Saudi Arabia

January 29: Saudi women defy tradition to enter workplace

Over the past six years female participation in the workforce has almost doubled from 9 percent to 16 percent, cutting into female unemployment of roughly 30 percent. While the majority of Saudi women are joining the teaching profession, many others are facing threats from ultraconservative opposition and replacing men in retail outlets as supermarket cashiers. [Financial Times](#)

February 1: Saudi women take the lead in civil service jobs

The statistics published by the Saudi Ministry of Civil Service revealed a steep increase in the number of women being employed in teaching and teaching positions. Female applicants took 62 percent of civil service jobs advertised over the past two months, in comparison to 38 percent of male applicants. [Asharq Al-Awsat](#)

February 10: Saudi soccer debate broadens over women's rights and nationalism

The restrictions on women's sports appear at odds with public opinion. A Saudi sociologist concluded in November on the basis of a survey that the vast majority of Saudis favor granting women the right to play sports. The survey conducted by Mariam Dujaini Al-Kabi as part of her master thesis showed that 73.5 percent

Tunisia

Janar27: Tunisia approves groundbreaking new constitution

The new constitution sets out to make the country of 11 million people a democracy, with a civil state. Laws are not based on Islamic law, unlike many other Arab constitutions. An entire chapter of the document, 28 articles, is dedicated to protecting citizens' rights, including protection from torture, the right to due process and freedom of worship. It guarantees equality between men and women before the law and the state's commitment to protecting women's rights. Aghita Yahyaoui, of the monitoring group Bawsala, said: "It will have a real impact on the rest of the Arab region, because finally we can say that women's rights are not a Western concept only, but also exist in Tunisia." [France 24](#)

UAE

Janar28: Finding a stumbling block for women entrepreneurs in Middle East

Although women have made great strides toward gender equality, men continue to dominate the business world in the Middle East.

