

MENA Women News Brief

September 22, 2015 - October 7, 2015

Algeria

September 28: Algeria's Progress in Terms of Women's Rights Highlighted in New York

"The Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women Affairs, Amounia Si Meslem Amer, highlighted in New York the huge progress made by Algeria in the field of rights of women and the girl, the ministry said Monday September 28, in a statement. (All Africa)

Bahrain

September 28: Bahrain minister's UN speech supports women's rights

"Bahrain's Social Development Minister has said the country is keen to improve the status of women in all aspects, and support their role in the comprehensive development under the reform project of King Hamad. Faeqa Al Saleh, the Social Development Minister, was speaking at the UN headquarters in New York during a discussion session on combating inequalities and the empowerment of women and girls, held as part of the UN summit adopting a developmental plan 2015." (Arabian Business)

Egypt

September 30: Egypt's Morality Crackdown Targets Female Dancers

"Human rights researchers say Egypt's morality police have been working in overdrive for the past two years. Hundreds of gay and transgender people had been targeted and arrested by the state before the campaign recently widened to include dancers, accused of inciting debauchery or prostitution." (NPR)

October 2: Egypt's Cairo University has banned teachers from wearing full face veil, sparking complaints

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Iran

September 22: Beyond glass ceiling, Iranian women face iron fence

“Iranian authorities have moved to introduce gender quotas that shut out women in its exams for those seeking government and public sector jobs. Coupled with reports of high rates of unemployment among women, this has sparked serious doubts about the administration of President Hassan Rouhani’s approach toward increasing women’s presence in society. The exact date for the ~~announcement~~ ^{release} of the results of its nationwide exam for new job applicants is unclear. But what is clear is that no matter what score female applicants may obtain, they will make up only 10 percent of those who will be employed.” (Al-Monitor)

October 1: Women in Iran Are Ready to Show They Mean Business

“As companies expand to Iran with investment from the United States and Europe after the nuclear accord, women are ready to make gains in a way few of their peers can in the Gulf Arab world and narrow the gap with western nations. While women have been legally obliged to cover their hair and observe Islamic rules of modest dress in clothing since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, they have never faced limitations when it comes to driving, voting and access to education. They also occupy some top political jobs – three of President Hassan Rouhani’s vice presidents are women.” (Bloomberg)

Iraq

September 26: ISIS: The 'Central' Role of Women in Forming the Next Jihadist Generation

“With an unprecedented number of women joining IS, the role they play has morphed into one more complex than simply being a ‘jihadist bride’. Women are assumed to be passive agents in their involvement, but they play a key role in the formation of the state – from the dissemination of propaganda and the recruitment of female support. While it is one thing to send out fighters to destabilize an area, it is another to create the next jihadist generation.” (International Business Times)

October 5: Yazidi woman tells of captivity at Baghdadi's house

“A young Kurdish Yazidi woman who was held as a hostage at the home of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the top leader of the so-called Islamic State, has told her story. The 21-year-old woman, whose name has been changed to Aven for this report, is originally from Shingal. She said she was abducted when ISIS attacked the area. Later, she was taken to Baghdadi's house where she was held for 20 days.” (

October 6: 'Hundreds' of Yazidi women killing themselves in ISIS captivity

“Islamic militants captured thousands of Yazidi women and children, and killed the men. ISIS claims the Quran justifies taking non-Muslim women and girls captive, and permits their rape. Many women,

Israel

September 25: The Military “Coup” of Orthodox Israeli Women

“Far from the headlines, and outside public discussion about the ‘religionizing’ of the IDF, one of the most amazing and surprising stories concerning the people’s army in this decade is unfolding, embodied by the women of the military. Year after year, the number of religiously observant women who enlist – although they are not obliged to serve by law – is breaking records. The army is making great efforts to ensure that they are able to both serve their country and to continue to observe religious precepts.”
(Haaretz)

Libya

September 27: Englishspeaking female jihadis in Libya issue Islamic St3Tj ET 54 692/be3(e)4(l)-2(i)-12(g)

October 1: Life in the 'Islamic State': Women – 'Till martyrdom do us part' (Stories by Kevin Sullivan)

"In Islamic State propaganda, life for women in the declared caliphate is filled with love, children and the joys of domestic life, such as an Oreo dessert. But the reality is often far more harsh for women who have moved there from the Arab world, Europe or the United States, according to specialists who monitor Islamic State social media postings. (The Washington Post)

Turkey

September 25: Turkish women earning far less than men in equal jobs

"A wide gap remains between the annual average principal occupation income of men and women in Turkey. The difference remains wide even among university graduates and company executives. Income inequality is also alarmingly high in sectors where female workforce participation is high. The average principal occupation income, which refers to the basic job that a person earns most from, remained at 20,084 liras for Turkish men and 15,681 liras for women in 2014. (#ürriyet)

October 5: Court ruling a victory for maiden name usage in Turkey

"The Supreme Court of Appeals ruled that a married woman can use her maiden name without the addition of her husband's last name in a victory for women. In a landmark verdict, the highest judicial authority in the Turkish legal system put an end to a longstanding debate whether women should be allowed to use their maiden names while married. (Daily Sabah)

October 6: The social impact of Syrian women as second wives in Turkey

"Turkish men taking Syrian refugee women as second wives is one of the main reasons for this increase in divorce rates in Kilis. Members of the Kilis Bar Association Center for Women's and Children's Rights state that there is a growing number of Turkish women who want to divorce their husbands because they have brought Syrian women into the home as their second wives. (Turkish Weekly)

United Arab Emirates

September 22: First Emirati woman appointed to position at the UN in New York

"Hind Abdulaziz Alowais became the first Emirati woman to be appointed to the United Nations Headquarters in New York since the UAE became a member of the United Nations in 1971. She was selected for the post of senior advisor in the office of the Deputy Executive Director, on September 7 by Lakshmi Puri, assistant secretary general for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnership, at the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). (Arabian Business)

September 28: Emirati women swarm polling stations in Dubai

"A remarkable number of Emirati women swarmed polling stations in Dubai on Monday, September 28 to vote for candidates who aim to empower women. The voters turned up at polling stations out of strong sense of duty and on issues that affect them. (Gulf News)

October 4: Emirati women disappointed in lack of female representation in FNC

"Emirati women have expressed their disappointment that only one female candidate was elected to the Federal National Council. Naama Al Sharhan, from Ras Al Khaimah, was the only women out of 78 candidates to succeed by picking up 1,004 votes. (The National)

Yemen

September 22: Violence, inequality plague women in conflict-ravaged Yemen

"Gender-based violence and gender inequality are grave problems throughout Yemen. Some 92 percent of women say that violence against women commonly occurs in the home, the country's 2013 demographic and health survey revealed. Yemen's deadly conflict is worsening conditions for women." (UN Population Fund)

September 30: Al Houthi violations of women's rights condemned

"Arab and Yemeni human rights defenders and activists have condemned in the strongest possible terms the brutal atrocities, crimes and violations committed by Al Houthi militia and group of deposed president Ali Abdullah Saleh against the women in Yemen. Speakers condemned these human rights abuses terming them as bereft of human sense and said the perpetrators had no regard for the sanctity of women in Yemen." (Gulf News)

October 5: Yemeni women protest Saudi-led aerial campaign

"On Sunday, October 4 a group of Yemeni women gathered in front of the UN office in the capital of Sana'a and held a rally to condemn the ongoing Saudi military aggression against the-