

MENA Women News Brief

April 12-April 26, 2017

Algeria

April 19: Faces of Algerian female election candidates to be displayed after order

"The run-up to Algeria's legislative election has taken a new turn after the national election body ordered political parties to display photos of female candidates on their posters instead of a blank image." ([Africa News](#))

April 21: Algeria unveils first ever electoral list composed entirely of women

"An opposition party in Algeria this week unveiled a parliamentary electoral list composed entirely of women." ([Daily Sabah](#))

April 25: HRW: Algeria endangering lives of women

"Human Rights Watch (HRW) has condemned the number of domestic violence cases in Algeria and the 'lack of diligence' of police investigations and the non-enforcement of sentences against the perpetrators of the assaults." ([Middle East Monitor](#))

Egypt

April 13: Egypt's Al-Azhar to open classes for female students in branch campus

"Usama Abdul Raouf, vice president of Al-Azhar University's Assiut branch, announced the opening of special classes for female students at the all-male faculties of pharmacy and medicine in early 2018. The March 27 decision was made to spare female students the long commutes to other branches of Al-Azhar University." ([Al Monitor](#))

April 17: Bahia Shehab: 1,000 ways to say no in Arabic

"In 2011, when the revolution swept through Egypt, Bahia Shehab stood on the streets of Cairo with a spray-can in her hand determined to deliver one message: No. A thousand times no." ([CNN](#))

April 18: Have Egypt's Salafists had a change of heart on female leaders?

"The Salafi Call has been known to modify and review several fatwas in the past, in light of prevailing political circumstances. This time, the Salafi Call seems to be having a change of heart in regard to women in leadership positions." ([Al Monitor](#))

April 21: Ancient Egyptian martial art enters modern world, opens to women

"Both fate and her fondness for tahteeb, a stick-fighting type of martial arts, played a role in the life of Rania Medhat, the first Egyptian woman ever certified as an instructor in this art, which dates back to the days of the pharaohs." ([Al Monitor](#))

April 23: Muslim women preachers enlisted in Egypt's fight against extremism

"In an ornately decorated prayer room, Nour al-Hoda al-Gammal delivers an impassioned sermon to a small group of women while their kids fidget restlessly." ([The Sydney Morning Herald](#))

April 26: 8 Egyptian Women Making A Difference Around The World

"From North America, to Europe, to Australia, Egyptian women are holding leading positions in politics, business and entertainment." ([Egyptian Streets](#))

Iran

April 18: Can Iran have a female president?

"More than 1,600 people registered to run for office in Iran's presidential election next month. However, most of them will not make it as the all-male Guardian Council will, in all probability, rule that they are ineligible to stand." ([TRT World](#))

April 19: No Woman Has Ever Run For Iranian President. Will Azam Taleghani Be The First?

"On April 14, a tiny, frail-looking woman wearing a chador and using a walker made her way slowly up the stairs of Iran's Interior Ministry in Tehran. Seventy-three-year-old Azam Taleghani was there to register as a candidate in the May 19 vote for Iran's presidency." ([RadioFreeEurope RadioLiberty](#))

April 25: Shirin Ebadi: 'Almost a fourth of the people on Earth are Muslim. Are they like each other? Of course not'

"Ebadi was in Florida for PeaceJam, which connects Nobel peace prize laureates with youth. But I found it hard to imagine the greatest Iranian human rights icon spending Persian New Year week at a teen camp on the Florida panhandle." ([The Guardian](#))

April 26: Rouhani government to fight trafficking in women

"Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's government is set to tackle trafficking in women, the head of the human rights department in the Women's Affairs Office in Tehran has confirmed." ([Middle East Monitor](#))

Iraq

April 12: Escaping Mosul, Iraqi women give birth where they can - aid group

"Pregnant women fleeing western Mosul where Daesh are defending their last stronghold against Iraqi troops are in some cases giving birth on the run, raising concerns about the health of mothers and newborns, an aid agency said on Wednesday, April 12." ([Middle East Monitor](#))

April 18: 'We want to learn': Iraqi girls back at school after years under Daesh

"Iraqi schoolgirl Manar Mahmoud is eager to resume classes after years of life under Daesh in Mosul, ignoring the nearby rattle of artillery fire." ([Arab News](#))

Israel/Palestinian Territories

April 16: Longest-serving female Palestinian prisoner release by Israel after 15 years

"Speaking to the Gaza-based radio station Sawt Al-Asra, Lina Al-Jarbouni said she her happiness was 'mixed with grief' for the thousands of other Palestinians still imprisoned by Israel, and urged all prisoners, both men and women, to support a mass hunger strike scheduled to start tomorrow, Palestinian Prisoners' Day." ([Middle East Monitor](#))

April 17: Palestinian women in East Jerusalem struggle to escape poverty

"Radia Salhout, 36, dreads Tuesdays. That's when she rises extra early in her small house in Jabal Mukabar, a poor, tough part of Palestinian East Jerusalem." ([UPI](#))

April 22: Netanyahu's wife to be indicted over corruption charges

"Israeli police have moved to indict Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's wife on allegations of corruption, Israeli broadcaster Channel 10 revealed on Friday, April 21." ([Middle East Monitor](#))

April 24: Wife of jailed Palestinian learns craft to support seven children

“Necessity is truly the mother of invention in the case of Lamiya Mustafa Hasanain, who quickly had to learn and master tailoring, embroidery, knitting and wool spinning to provide for her seven children after Israeli occupation forces arrested her husband and his six brothers during the first Palestinian Intifada (1987).” ([Gulf News](#))

April 25: Israel appoints country's first female sharia judge

“Israel appointed its first female judge in its Muslim sharia court system on Tuesday, April 25, officials said, a move hailed as historic.” ([Al Monitor](#))

Jordan

April 12: Female plumbers in Jordan clear path for women in labor market

“A number of Jordanian and Syrian women are defying social norms by working outside the home. On top of that, a few of them have ventured into a profession that has long been the sole preserve of men – plumbing.” ([Al Monitor](#))

April 17: Meet the Jordanian comedian Tima Shomali ... aka 'Tina Fey of the Arab world'

“Jordanian comedian Tima Shomali, aka the 'Tina Fey of the Arab world,' is someone you should definitely be following. She's a bundle of energy - taking on various roles in acting, comedy, production and writing.” ([Step Feed](#))

April 18: Jordan approves domestic violence protection bill, amendments to banking law

“Some male MPs defended the beating of women, as lawmakers approved the domestic violence protection bill and the amended banking law during two legislative sessions on Sunday, April 16.” ([Zawya](#))

Lebanon

April 12: Lebanon: Pass Bill to End Child Marriage

“Lebanon’s parliament should quickly pass legislation to end child marriage in the country, Human Rights Watch said today (April 12).” ([Human Rights Watch](#))

April 16: How Rola Sleiman became the first Arab female pastor

“To anyone's knowledge, Rola Sleiman is the first female pastor in the entirety of the Arab Christian world.” ([Al Jazeera](#))

April 22: Lebanon rape law: Wedding dresses hang in Beirut sea front protest

“Activists campaigning to change Lebanon's law on rape have staged a macabre protest on Beirut's famous sea front.” ([BBC](#))

Morocco

April 14: Morocco's Salwa Akhannouch Wins New African Woman Award in Business

“Moroccan businesswoman Salwa Idrissi Akhannouch won the New African woman Award in business, given by pan-African magazine 'New African Woman magazine,' at a ceremony that took place in Dakar.” ([Morocco World News](#))

April 16: AfDB to Launch Investment Fund for Female Entrepreneurs in Morocco

“The African Development Bank has announced that it will launch an Investment Fund for Female Entrepreneurship in Morocco.” ([Morocco World News](#))

April 18: Moroccan NGOs Urge New Government to Take Action on Women's Rights

"Spring of Dignity, a coalition of Moroccan NGOs, has urged the new government coalition to consider their demands regarding women's rights ahead of the first governmental council to be held on April 19." ([Morocco World News](#))

Qatar

April 20: Qatari Women In The Workplace

"The last 10 years have seen many positive developments in the journey of Qatari women in the workplace believes Bothaina AlAnsari, Founder of Qatariat - a company specializing in helping Qatari women advance in the office." ([Forbes Middle East](#))

Saudi Arabia

April 14: Saudi woman's fear: 'They will kill me'

"Activists expressed fear Friday, April 14, for the safety of a young Saudi woman they say was returned to the kingdom against her will, in a case highlighting tight restrictions on women." ([Al Monitor](#))

April 15: Report shows 80% of job seekers in Saudi Arabia are women

"Women constituted over three quarters of job seekers in Saudi Arabia, according to a report covering the last quarter of 2016." ([Arab News](#))

April 21: Cellphones in Hand, Saudi Women Challenge Notions of Male Control

"Lately a lot of women in Saudi Arabia have been loudly speaking out against male control over their lives, but as several have recently found, it is still the men who have the last word." ([New York Times](#))

April 25: Saudi Arabia's election to UN women's commission draws ire

"The principal UN commission charged with promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women has picked 13 new members by secret vote. One selection is raising eyebrows: Saudi Arabia." ([CNN](#))

April 26: Saudi council rejects proposal for female sports colleges

"A proposal to establish sports education colleges for Saudi women failed to win enough votes in the kingdom's top advisory body, a council member who drafted the plan said Wednesday, April 26." ([AP](#))

Syria

April 19: Bana al-Abed to publish her own diary of the Syrian war

"Seven-year-old Syrian girl Bana al-Abed, who became known around the world as Syria's Anne Frank, will soon have her own war memoirs published." ([Al Bawaba](#))

April 24: From aspiring stylist to jihadist widow: one woman's Syria story

"Islam Maytat thought marrying an Afghan-British businessman was her ticket to a new life as a fashionista in London. Instead she became a widow living under jihadist rule in Syria." ([Al Monitor](#))

Turkey

April 15: In Turkey's Referendum, Women's Rights Are on the Ballot

"For most of the last century, Turkey has been the go-to example of an Islamic country that doubles as a secular democracy, where women enjoy vast freedoms unlike in many Middle Eastern countries." ([Newsweek](#))

April 18: Erdogan's Victory in Turkey's Referendum Could Be a Loss for Women

"Erdogan and his supporters say the new presidential system of government will give the country more stability, especially in the wake of last year's failed coup and amid terrorism threats. But democracy and human rights advocates say it will concentrate even more power with Erdogan, who's recently displayed increasingly dictatorial tendencies. Women in the latter camp are especially concerned." ([Fortune](#))

United Arab Emirates

April 24: Meet The Muslim Woman Who Inspired Nike To Enter The Hijab Business

"It was two years ago when Amna Al Haddad, while training for the Rio summer Olympics, got the call: Nike wanted to sponsor her and give her a starring role in its "Inner Strength" series featuring inspiring athletes." ([Fast Company](#))

Regional

April 17: Women are a growing influence on banking in the Middle East

"As well as being a member of Emirates NBD's group executive committee, Lubna Qassim also sits on the board of a Lebanese bank. It's a rare position for a female to be in, given the global average of women sitting on boards today is 16 per cent and in the GCC it's a dismal 2 per cent, according to a recent study by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (Acca) Middle East." ([The National](#))

April 21: Why Women's Equality Has Made Little Progress Since the Arab Spring

"The active role played by women in the Arab Spring of 2010-2011 was seen inside and outside the region as an example showing that a different kind of gender politics was possible, ushering in greater empowerment for women." ([Newsweek](#))

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