

# MENA Women's News Brief

April 8-April 21, 2014

## **Algeria**

### **April 9: Only woman in Algeria presidential race 'won't hold back'**

"A string of white pearls around her neck, her hair tied in a bun, Louisa Hanoune, the only woman running for Algeria's presidency, holds out her palms and declares: I have clean hands." ([Al-Ahram](#))

## **Bahrain**

### **April 15: Supreme Council of Women applauds Cabinet approval of a wife's right to acquire business licenses**

In Bahrain, "The Supreme Council for Women (SCW) has highly commended the Cabinet approval during its regular weekly session on Sunday of a proposal submitted from the Representatives' Council regarding the right of a wife to own a commercial licensure (CR) that does not prevent her husband from eligibility to financial support (i.e. cost-of-living allowance)." ([Bahrain News Agency](#))

## **Egypt**

### **April 8: Egypt women: Rights on paper, not yet on ground**

"Women activists say they won a major step forward with Egypt's new constitution, which enshrined greater rights for women. But months after its passage, they're worrying whether those rights will be implemented or will turn out to be merely ink on paper." ([Daily Mail](#))

### **April 9: Egypt's new anti-sexual harassment law submitted to cabinet**

"The new draft law provides, for the first time in Egypt, a definition of sexual harassment. The draft states that a sexual harasser is one who 'accosts others in a public or private place through following or stalking them, using gestures or words or through modern means of communication or in any other means through actions that carry sexual or pornographic hints.' The new suggested punishment includes a prison sentence, a fine or both." ([Al-Ahram](#))

### **April 10: Egyptian female activists form 'anti-coup' coalition**

"Nine Egyptian anti-coup women's groups have united to form a coalition with the stated aim of stepping up efforts to end what they describe as last summer's 'military coup' that unseated elected president Mohamed Morsi." ([World Bulletin](#))

### **April 11: Who betrayed Egypt's revolution?**

Activist Shahenda Maklad, 76, "has been an Egyptian heroine and a symbol of Egypt's revolution(s). She was a co-founder of virtually every opposition movement formed in the past few decades, including Kifaya, the National Association for Change and Egyptian Women for Change. The list is pages long. Hers could be seen as a 'Lifelong Trip to Tahrir' as the headline of Radwan Adam's article suggested in February 2012, one year after Egypt's January revolution." ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **April 13: Female TV Personality Plans to Run for Egypt Presidency**

“News presenter and activist Bothaina Kamel said on Sunday that she intends to run for Egypt's upcoming presidential elections, adding that she has already begun collecting signatures.” ([All Africa](#))

### **April 16: Successive Egypt governments failed to stop sexual violence: Report**

“A report blaming consecutive governments in Egypt for not taking measures to terminate sexual violence in the public domain was issued on Wednesday by a coalition of feminists and human rights groups.” ([Al-Ahram](#))

## **Iran**

### **April 8: Iran's medical schools to limit female enrollment**

“Medical schools in Iran will restrict admission to women in the coming academic year, the Shargh daily reports. The report indicates that the number of women in the medical field has risen from 42 percent of total admissions in 1992 to 68 percent in the last year.” ([Payvand](#))

### **April 20: Khamenei, Rouhani clash on women's role in society**

“On the occasion of Women's Day in Iran, Iran's president and supreme leader presented contrasting roles in society for women. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has previously rebuked President Hassan Rouhani's cultural policies, but this appears to be the first time that the president has contradicted the supreme leader in an area that the two have consistently clashed.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **April 20: Rouhani says Iran's women not second class citizens**

“Iran's President Hassan Rouhani admitted Sunday that women in his country still face discrimination and cultural barriers but he insisted they are not universally treated as second-class citizens.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

## **Iraq**

### **April 17: Iraq's draft child marriage law seen as political stunt - and sign of times**

“Iraq's own clerical establishment does not back the bill, making its chance of success very slim. Critics say the draft is all about short-term political advantage, as Shi'ite Islamist parties compete with each other for votes in the run-up to April 30 elections in a highly-charged sectarian atmosphere.” ([Reuters](#))

### **April 20: Female candidates fight for rights in Iraq campaign**

“With fears that women's rights are being eroded in Iraq, prospective female lawmakers are determined to push women's issues to the fore of campaigning for this month's elections.” ([Global Post](#))

## **Lebanon**

### **April 9: Why does Lebanese bill on domestic violence fail to tackle marital rape?**

“The domestic violence bill does, however, contain a number of protective measures. Women can now apply for a restraining order against an assailant, and emergency accommodation is provided for victims of abuse – earlier, many at-risk women were forced to share a home with their attacker.” ([The Guardian](#))

### **April 15: Lebanon's level playing field**

“Here in Lebanon, football clubs focus mostly on their male players so the female involvement is quite limited. But at the Girl's Football Academy (GFA), we take our youth training very seriously. They are

the ones who can improve the most and go on to become part of the national team. That is where they can really make a difference for the country at an international level.” ([Al-Jazeera](#))

## **Morocco**

### **April 13: Moroccan women march to demand gender equality**

“A group of around 800 Moroccans, mostly women, staged a march in the capital Rabat on Sunday demanding that a constitutional guarantee of gender equality be applied in the kingdom.” ([Daily Star](#))

## **Palestinian Territories**

### **April 20: Former Olympian puts Palestinian women through their paces**

“Dozens of Palestinian girls and women, most of them newcomers to the world of running, got a lesson in track basics last week from a track and field great — three-time Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey.” ([Haaretz](#))

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **April 9: Saudi considers lifting ban on girls sports**

“Saudi Arabia is considering ending its controversial ban on sports in girls' state schools, after the country's consultative council recommended the ban be lifted over vociferous opposition from traditionalists.” ([Al-Jazeera](#))

### **April 13: Separate ministry for women demanded**

“The Shura Council is considering a proposal to launch a high council for women, or a separate ministry for women, according to Thuraya Arrayed, a Shura member.” ([Zawya](#))

### **April 13: First Saudi Female Radio Presenter: Self-belief is paramount**

“Najdiyah Al-Hejailan is better known as Salwa Ibrahim, but it is her voice that is perhaps best known of all. She is a pioneer: hers was the first female voice to be broadcast on Saudi airwaves.” ([Asharq Al-Awsat](#))

### **April 15: Saudi Arabia enforces law to compensate women in domestic violence cases**

“Saudi Arabia has enforced a strict law that imposes a hefty penalty of SR 5,000-50,000 (\$1,333-13,333) on the husband if he beats his wife.” ([Khaleej Times](#))

### **April 17: Children born to expats who married Saudi mothers get 'equal rights'**

“Children born to expatriates who have married Saudi women will be treated as Saudis for work, education and medical purposes, Sulaiman Al Yahya, director-general of Saudi Arabia's passports department said.” ([Gulf News](#))

### **April 21: Female Saudi pilot flies high**

“A Saudi woman has become the first licensed female pilot in the Kingdom. Thirty-five-year-old Hanadi Al-Hindi, who had battled kidney problems, acquired licensing from the Jeddah-based General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) to fly planes in Saudi Arabia.” ([Arab News](#))

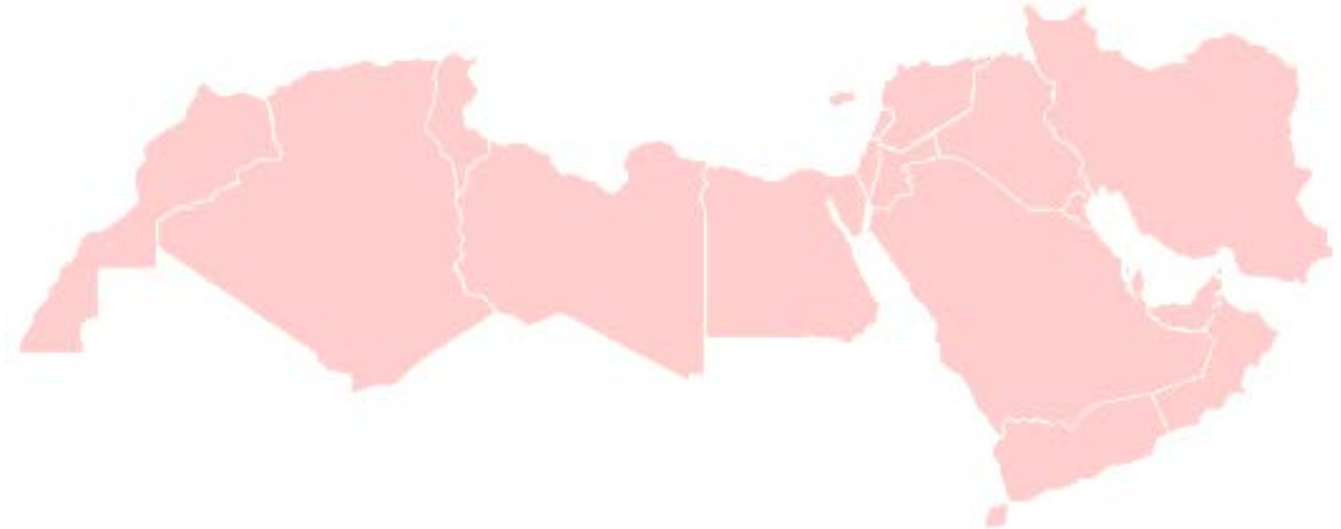
## UAE

### **April 16: Progress in battle against human trafficking as cases fall by 60%**

“The number of human trafficking cases fell to 19 last year from 47 in 2012, a drop of 60 per cent...Most of the victims are young women aged between 19 and 35 from the Middle East and South Asia who came in search of work as housemaids, receptionists or waitresses.” ([The National](#))

### **April 18: Women edge into Gulf boardrooms as economies, societies shift**


“While female company directors are still a rarity in the Middle East, the region's growing wealth, rising education standards for women and government efforts to promote more equal opportunities should help make it easier for women to crack the "glass ceiling", or perceived discrimination against female executives, in future.” ([Reuters](#))



By Samaa Ahmed



**Additional MENA Women's News Briefs are available [here](#).**

Follow the Middle East Program on Twitter @WilsonCenterMEP  and Facebook 