

# **MENA Women News Brief**

**August 30, 2016-September 13, 2016**

## **Bahrain**

### **September 11: SCW holds training session on integrating women's needs**

“The Supreme Council for Women (SCW) has held a session for the members of the Bahrain Training Society to prepare them to be trainers on the concept of ‘Integrating Women’s Needs in Development within the Framework of Equal Opportunities,’ including the preparation of training portfolios, planning for the training through determining needs, training methods, preparation of training materials, presentation skills, body language, practical training and training assessment and follow-up.” ([Bahrain News Agency](#))

## **Egypt**

### **September 2: Egypt to tackle sexual harassment alongside Eid al-Adha celebrations**

“A new anti-sexual harassment initiative entitled ‘Aman,’ which aims to end sexual harassment, is set to launch alongside Eid al-Adha celebrations, its organizers said. Reports of sexual harassment and assault in crowded areas increase during the holidays. ‘Aman,’ an Arabic word which translates into security, is a project that aims to encourage Egyptian women to report crimes of sexual violence to authorities, and to use media to their advantage.” ([Albawaba](#))

### **September 7: Egyptian MP: Women must undergo FGM to control men's desires**

“Women must undergo female genital mutilation (FGM) to help curb men’s ‘sexual weakness,’ an Egyptian MP, Elhamy Agina, said. He added that the procedure would reduce women’s ‘sexual appetites.’ Illegal in Egypt since 2008, Agina said banning FGM would only work if Egypt had ‘strong men’ who were able to control their desires.” ([Middle East Monitor](#))

## **Iran**

### **September 1: Canadian-Iranian Professor Hospitalized After Months in Iranian Jail**

“A Canadian professor jailed in Iran, Homa Hoodfar, was recently hospitalized after spending months in the country’s notorious Evin prison, according to her family and legal representative. Hoodfar, a renowned expert on gender studies and professor emerita at Montreal’s Concordia University, was in Iran conducting academic work when Revolutionary Guard officers confiscated her passport in March. She was later arrested on June 6, and her family says she is being held in solitary confinement.” ([Huffington Post](#))

### **September 5: Iran shuts 800 shops for selling 'unconventional' women's coats**

“Iranian police said they had closed more than 800 clothes shops to stop them selling ‘unconventional’ women's coats, state media reported. A further 3,000 shops have been sent warnings, the IRNA news agency reported. A new fashion for women's coats - known as ‘manteaux’ in Iran - with English phrases printed on the back had attracted the attention of the authorities, who passed new regulations in July.” ([Middle East Eye](#))

### **September 8: Beneath Iranian Supreme Leader's New Plan for Women, Social Structures of the Past (Op-Ed by Haleh Esfandiari)**

“Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has again turned his attention to the role of women in society. In a 16-point declaration issued to all three branches of government, the supreme leader

discussed making Iran a 'family-centered society.' Basically, Ayatollah Khamenei wants women to marry, raise children and be homemakers. His policy statement calls for 'a national, all-encompassing campaign to facilitate and increase marriage and to discourage remaining single.'" ([Wall Street Journal](#))

### **September 9: Iran Sentences Iranian-British Charity Worker to Five Years in Prison**

"Iran has sentenced an Iranian-British charity worker, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, to five years in prison, after detaining her while on a family trip to the country in April, her husband said. She is one of several dual nationals Iran has arrested in recent months, some of whom have been accused of spying." ([Wall Street Journal](#))

### **Iraq**

#### **September 4: Iraqi official: Over 600 Shia Turkmen women, children under ISIS captivity**

"More than 600 Shia Turkmen women and children remain under the control of ISIS,' Masrour Aswad, a member of the High Commission of Human Rights in Iraq, said. He also said that international organizations are not paying enough attention to free these hostages. The women in captivity are often used as sex slaves and the children trained for suicide attacks." ([AhluBayt News Agency](#))

### **Jordan**

#### **August 30: Gov't 'committed to legal amendments to protect women' — minister**

"The government is committed to ensuring better legal protection for women and is working to amend family, personal status and labor laws,' Justice Minister Bassam Talhouni said. Opening the first National Consultations on Gender Justice in Jordan, which is focusing on the outcomes of a United Nations Development Program review on how laws affect women, Talhouni called for more programs to raise awareness of human rights, particularly among women." ([JordanTimes](#))

#### **September 5: Jordan to Host Women's Asian Cup in 2018**

"Jordan will become the first Middle East nation to host a top Asian women's football tournament when it holds the next Women's Asian Cup in 2018, officials said. Moya Dodd, who chairs the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) women's football committee, called the decision a 'geographical landmark.' Jordan is also hosting the Fifa Women's U-17 World Cup later this month." ([Gulf News](#))

### **Palestinian Territories**

#### **August 31: Identities of female Palestinian electoral candidates hidden**

"Palestinian election documents have caused controversy after some female candidates were listed them as 'sister' or 'the wife of ...' instead of using their actual names. Questions have been raised about whether or not such candidates can partake in government if they are not comfortable with their names being disclosed. Director of a Coalition of Women's Organizations in the Gaza Strip, Nadia Abu Nahla, said the lack of publication of women's name is a step back for the political parties." ([Middle East Monitor](#))

### **Qatar**

#### **September 1: QC lecture focuses on women's rights in Islam**

"The Qatar Charity (QC) Center for Social Development, Al Rayyan women's branch, hosted an educational lecture titled 'Aggression against Women.' Ali Ibrahim al-Ghareeb, programs and centers director at the Local Development Executive Management in QC, said: 'The lecture comes as part of the implementation of plans on cooperation with local community institutions to raise about the importance of women's rights in Islam.'" ([Gulf Times](#))

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **September 2: Saudi Arabia Hashtag Calls For An End To Male Guardianship**

“A hashtag calling for an end to male guardianship over women in Saudi Arabia is gathering momentum. #TogetherToEndMaleGuardianship is especially poignant given the kingdom’s poor record of women’s rights, which includes restrictions on driving, travel, marriage and work. Thus far, almost 200,000 tweets with the hashtag have been made in English and Arabic, signifying support for the movement to emancipate women from oppressive male rule.” ([Huffington Post UK](#))

## **Syria**

### **August 31: Milk and Mentors: Helping Syrian Women Support Their Families**

“When Nadia Alawa moved from Japan to New Hampshire with her family in 1996, she intended to focus on raising her eight children. But years later, a single incident from the Syrian civil war compelled Alawa to turn her focus halfway across the world to help families suffering through the conflict. NuDay Syria is known for setting up mentorship programs for women and girls, thus encouraging involvement and the potential for learning.” ([NewsDeeply](#))

### **September 1: Women of Syria, a strong constituency for peace**

“We, the Syrian women, can—and may well be—the backbone of Syrian peace and reconciliation,” says Insaf Hamad, member of the first-ever Women’s Advisory Board, composed of 12 independent civil society representatives from diverse backgrounds, who consult regularly with the UN Special Envoy for Syria, raising matters that are missing from the agenda and providing recommendations to assist the peace talks. Their unanimous ask: resume the peace process, end the conflict in Syria.” ([UNWomen](#))

## **Turkey**

### **August 30: Turkish women in desperate hunt for embryos after IVF clinic shuts down in wake of coup**

“As a group of rogue officers moved to overthrow Turkey’s government, Zeynep Ustahüseyin was preparing for pregnancy. She had already quit her job in anticipation, yet two weeks later, she dashed to her clinic in a state of despair. Amid a sweeping post-coup purge, the government had shut the hospital and seized everything in it. Dozens of distraught women who say they had frozen eggs or embryos at the closed IVF clinic tell similar stories.” ([Telegraph](#))

### **September 4: Istanbul hosts International Women's Museum Conference in October**

“Organized by the Istanbul Women's Museum and Bilgi University's Faculty of Communications, the ‘Women's Museums: Center of Social Memory and Place of Inclusion’ conference will be held at Istanbul Salt Galata October 20-22, bringing together directors, curators and artists from women's museums around the world and academics, social activists and non-governmental organization spokespersons to discuss the socio-cultural role that women's museums play in 21st century society.” ([Daily Sabah](#))

## **United Arab Emirates**

### **September 2: Hospital honors women’s day with free check-ups**

“As the UAE honored women with Emirati Women’s Day, Medeor 24x7 Hospital Abu Dhabi has dedicated a whopping number of services for all women. These exclusive services for women start with a free pap smear, one of the earliest ways to determine if cervical cancer may develop. This is the easiest gynecologic cancer to prevent since it develops very slowly.” ([The Gulf Today](#))

#### **September 4: Emirati woman earns first marine certification**

“An Emirati woman, Sahar Rasti, who works for Abu Dhabi Ports has navigated her way into the UAE maritime history books. Rasti, navigation services coordinator for marine firm Safeen has earned one of the highest international certifications in navigational standards, Abu Dhabi Ports announced. Marine authorities said Rasti is the first Emirati woman to complete training certification related to operating and managing aids to navigation.” ([Gulf News](#))

#### **Yemen**

#### **September 7: Houthi militias recruiting women to fight**

“Footage and images of women with children and infants participating in a military parade in Yemen’s capital Sanaa surfaced, as they pledged to fight alongside Iran-backed Houthi militias. A source close to Houthi militia leaders told the Arabic website of Al Arabiya’s news channel that the military parade was attended by hundreds of women and is the first public appearance revealing the formation of a women’s militia unit.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

#### **September 8: ‘Women like us:’ On Women and war in Yemen (Op-Ed: National Yemen Staff)**

“The idea of documenting women’s lives during a conflict is not new. However, these stories remain under-reported in Yemen, a country torn by war and conflict. In the photo series ‘Women Like Us,’ visual storyteller Thana Farooq captures the stories of women from different social status and class in Yemen and their experience of the war – their struggles, their aspirations, and their ambitions. While each woman has suffered the war differently, yet they all share a sense of hope and resilience.” ([National Yemen](#))

#### **General**

#### **September 4: Voices above the chaos: female war poets from the Middle East**


“So the Middle East continues to implode – but amid the chaos emerges a further force, perhaps incredibly, a poetic and literary one. It comes in defiant journalism, and it comes in the verses of two female poets, part of an emergent school of verse, much of it written by women: Bejan Matur and Maram al-Masri – Kurdish and Syrian respectively.” ([The Guardian](#))

#### **September 8: The Islamic State’s Problem With Women (Op-Ed by Fatima Sadiqi)**

“It is telling that women feature heavily in the Islamic State’s rise and fall. While ISIS’s craven massacre of Yazidi women in Iraq and Syria helped put it on the map, its gradual downfall is coming partly at the hands of Kurdish women fighting against it on the front lines. It is easy to see a simple revenge story in this progression, but a deeper reading points to the fundamental role of women in ISIS’s ideology, and their future role in its denouement.” ([Project Syndicate](#))

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