

# **MENA Women News Brief**

**July 18, 2016-August 2, 2016**

## **Bahrain**

### **July 26: Bahrain's uprising and its movement for radical change (Op-Ed by Abdulnabi Alekry)**

“Women and youth were at the forefront of Bahrain's uprising in February 2011, and are at the heart of the ensuing movement for radical change. Women have traditionally been marginalised in Bahraini society. This holds true even within the ranks of oppositional progressive organisations whether Islamist or secular.” ([Open Democracy](#))

## **Egypt**

### **July 20: Egyptian women activists criticize Nawal Saadawi for her call to legalise prostitution**

“A group of Egyptian female activists have attacked Egyptian feminist writer Nawal El-Saadawi for calls she made for legalising prostitution in the country instead of denying its existence. El-Saadawi also claimed that Islam does not oppose abortion.” ([Middle East Monitor](#))

### **July 24: New ad campaign seeks to empower Egyptian women (Op-Ed by Reham Mokbel)**

“Egypt's National Council for Women launched last month a media campaign under the slogan ‘The Taa' Marbouta is your strength.’ In Arabic, a language where words have grammatical gender, the taa' marbouta is a letter coming at the end of a word to denote femininity.” ([Al Monitor](#))

### **July 29: Arrest of Egypt FGM doctor Raslan Fadl welcomed**

“Campaigners have welcomed the arrest of Egypt's first doctor to have been convicted of carrying out female genital mutilation (FGM). Raslan Fadl was sentenced in January 2015 over the death of Souheir al-Bataa, a 13-year-old girl who was subjected to the illegal procedure. However, he avoided arrest and was said to have carried on working as a doctor.” ([BBC](#))

### **August 1: Meet one of Egypt's first female bodyguards**

“For the first time in Egypt, a female is being hired by public figures, artists and VIPs as a bodyguard after her success as a bodybuilding trainer. Hind Wajih, who's in her 20's, has practiced Karate, Kung Fu and Aikido and played as a football defender.” ([Al Arabiya](#))

## **Iran**

### **July 28: Women ‘arrested for riding bicycles’ in Iran and made to sign pledge never to cycle in public again**

“A group of women has reportedly been arrested for riding bicycles in Iran and made to sign pledges not to repeat the ‘violation.’ They were planning to participate in a cycling event in the north-western city of Marivan when police told them a new government directive had barred women riding bicycles in public.” ([Independent](#))

### **July 29: Men in Iran post photos of themselves wearing hijabs in protest of strict laws governing women**

“Women in Iran have long protested laws that force them to cover their heads, but now men, too, are standing up in protest. Or rather, covering up in protest. Masih Alinejad, an Iranian activist who runs the My Stealthy Freedom campaign from New York, asked men to participate in her social media hijab

protest by using the #meninhijab hashtag and post the photos of themselves wearing headscarves.” ([The New York Times](#))

### **August 2: Iran’s Rouhani shelves civil service exam over female discrimination**

“Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has postponed the annual civil service entry exam because of concerns it discriminates against women. Mr. Rouhani ordered a review of all 3,000 jobs on offer, and a rethink if they were found to be biased to men.” ([BBC](#))

### **Iraq**

#### **July 19: In Mosul, 12 Women Who Stood against ISIS Executed**

“For the first time since ISIS took control over Mosul (June 2014), it witnessed on Monday evening (July 18) a women demonstration against ISIS practices. Saeed Mamozini, the head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party’s branch 14 in Mosul, told Asharq Al-Awsat that the protest was aggressively blocked with 12 women shot and others arrested.” ([Asharq Al-Awsat](#))

### **Israel**

#### **July 19: Israel sentences female Palestinian journalist over incitement claims**

“The Israeli Magistrate’s Court in Jerusalem sentenced female Palestinian journalist Samah Dweik to six months in prison on Monday, July 18 on Facebook incitement charges, Quds Press reported. The Israeli forces arrested Dweik from her house in Ras al-Amoud suburb in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan on 10 April. She is now in HaSharon Prison.” ([Middle East Monitor](#))

#### **July 24: Female Victims of Domestic Violence in Israel to Get More State Help**

“According to new bill before Ministerial Committee for Legislation, the state will grant women a package of benefits, including occupational training and subsidized day care, and will also nearly double the 'halfway housing' available.” ([Haaretz](#))

#### **August 2: More Israeli Arab Women Out of Work Despite Government Funding**

“Despite government plans of the past six years to encourage employment for Israeli Arabs, most Arab women still are unemployed, according to statistics released on Monday, August 1 by the Knesset’s research institute. The government has spent some 3.7 billion shekels (\$971 million) during this period, the state comptroller has estimated, to increase employment among Israeli Arabs.” ([Haaretz](#))

### **Lebanon**

#### **August 1: Lebanon sex trafficking: Syrian woman describes nine-month ordeal**

“Rama was lured to Lebanon with the promise of a restaurant job, endured beatings and torture before finally escaping with four other women. The only time Rama, a 24-year-old from Syria, broke down as she recalled her months of torture and sexual enslavement in a human trafficking ring in Lebanon was when she described how she lost her faith.” ([The Guardian](#))

### **Libya**

#### **July 21: How Libyan women are hitting back at ISIL through home cooking**

“A smell of frying onions fills the air as women in colourful dresses and headscarves bustle through the six-room, part-finished villa that has been transformed into a large sprawling kitchen. For the women of Libya’s third city of Misrata, it is another day of preparing savoury dishes, snacks and sweets for the thousands of men battling against ISIL militants on the frontline in Sirte.” ([The National](#))

## **Morocco**

### **July 21: Morocco's Lower House Adopts Draft Law on Violence Against Women**

“The house of representatives (lower house) adopted, on Wednesday, July 20 by a majority vote, a draft bill on fighting violence against women. The draft bill was approved during a plenary session with a majority of 83 votes versus 22 votes against.” ([Morocco World News](#))

### **July 26: BAD Allocates \$3 Billion Toward Female Entrepreneurs**

“The Banque Africaine de Développement (BAD) announced on Thursday, July 21 in Morocco that it would allocate \$3 billion toward a fund for female entrepreneurs in Africa. This was a part of a visit to Morocco by the President of BAD, Akinwumi Adesina, for ‘Africa 50,’ a fund that works to improve Africa’s infrastructure and economy.” ([Morocco World News](#))

### **July 27: Asma Lamrabet: Deconstructing Patriarchy in Islamic Thought**

“In an interview with HuffPost Maroc published Sunday, July 24, Asma Lamrabet said that a debate about the legacy of Morocco ‘is necessary and indispensable today in the profound transformations affecting society.’ Lamrabet recently appeared on the television channel 2M, making a statement in favor of the decriminalization of breaking the fast publicly during Ramadan.” ([Morocco World News](#))

## **Palestinian Territories**

### **July 22: Honey provides sweet relief for Palestinian women**

“Their faces covered in mesh and bodies protected by white suits, three Palestinian women carefully inspect beehives which they say have helped to transform their lives. In the hills of the West Bank, occupied for nearly half a century by Israel, producing honey has become an economic lifeline for a growing number of women.” ([The Gulf Today](#))

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **July 21: I'm a Saudi Woman Who Has a Male Guardian. He Is My Greatest Supporter (Op-Ed by Jasmine Bager)**

“It isn't your imagination: Saudi women seem either scary, scarred or scared to those in the West. The truth is, well, much more layered. Last weekend, Human Rights Watch released a new report on Saudi women and the big bad, ‘G’ word: ‘guardianship.’ The report, “Boxed In: Women and Saudi Arabia’s Male Guardianship System,” begins by saying: ‘In Saudi Arabia, a woman’s life is controlled by a man from birth until death.’” ([TIME](#))

### **July 21: Saudi women's sports events must follow Shariah laws**

“Women’s sports will be allowed in the Kingdom according to Shariah law, Saudi Olympic Committee Executive Director Hussam Al-Qurashi has announced. ‘Women have the right to exercise and participate in sports, because a healthy mother raises healthy children. But the Saudi Olympic Committee will not do anything against the decorum of Saudi society and the instructions of the Council of Senior Scholars. The committee believes in the principles of Shariah,’ said Al-Qurashi.” ([Saudi Gazette](#))

### **July 23: Saudi women who work in mixed locations face social backlash**

“Women who work in mixed gender environments face greater social discrimination than their counterparts who work in segregated work places, according to a report in Al-Jazirah daily. Women doctors and journalists, regardless of the success they have achieved in their respective fields, complain that they often face rejection from men who prefer to marry women who do not work with other men.” ([Al Arabiya](#))

### **July 28: Consent of women must for marriage, says minister**

“Minister of Justice Walid Al-Samaani has directed marriage officials (mazouns) to listen personally to women’s consent to matrimony before they write down marriage contracts. ‘Mazouns should have the approval of the woman herself and not anyone else who may claim to be her representative, even if it is her father,’ he said.” ([Saudi Gazette](#))

### **July 31: Saudi Women Have Had Enough of Men Saying No (Op-Ed by Kristine Beckerle)**

“A few months ago, I was lucky enough to meet a young Saudi woman—we’ll call her Zahra. Zahra was smart, eloquent, and funny. She wanted to pursue a degree outside Saudi Arabia in a field not yet available in her country. But, Zahra said, her father, her male guardian, told her ‘no.’ When Zahra’s sister asked to travel abroad to study, he said the same.” ([Newsweek](#))

### **July 31: Saudi Arabia Doubles Female Olympic Athletes from 2 to 4**

“Saudi Arabia will send four women to the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, doubling its female participation after two women competed for the first time at the 2012 London Games. Hosam al-Qurashi, executive director of the Saudi Olympic Committee, told The Associated Press on Sunday that two of the women will participate in track and field, one in judo and one in fencing.” ([ABC News](#))

## **Syria**

### **July 21: Europe Must Help Syria’s Women Make Peace (Op-Ed by Hind Kabawat and Margot Wallström)**

“Violence in conflict does not discriminate. Men, women and children suffer from starvation, bombings, forced disappearances and torture. They equally experience traumatic loss when driven out of their homes. This is the case in Syria, where men and women and their families uniformly face the dire consequences of war, as evident in Darayya, Aleppo and across Syria.” ([The Huffington Post](#))

### **July 27: Campaign aims to enhance living conditions of Syrians in Egypt**

“In an attempt to help the Syrian community fit into Egyptian society and provide healthcare services, Misr Foundation organised a series of activities for Syrian women and children. Focusing mainly on enhancing their living conditions, the campaign started with a series of seminars for Syrian women.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

### **August 1: Across borders, Syrian women gain strength from each other**

“Syrian-born Maria Alabdeh was studying microbiology in France in 2011 when the Syrian revolution ignited. To help — at least from afar, Alabdeh joined forces with an organization based in Paris, called Women Now for Development, started in 2012 by Syrian writer Samar Yazbek. The nonprofit helps teach Syrian women to read and write, and offers them vocational training, such as sewing, knitting, secretarial work, first aid and hair-cutting to enable them to earn a living.” ([PBS](#))

## **Turkey**

### **July 18: Faced with a coup, Turkey’s women-led media strike a blow for democracy**

“Despite intense political differences and division within the country, Turks—regardless of their political parties—united in choosing democracy over military intervention. Two women at the helm of the main free and independent media company in Turkey played a critical role in ensuring that the voice of democracy took precedence at this crucial time.” ([The New York Times](#))

### **July 19: ‘Turkey has changed’: Women on the failed coup**

“Friday night's (July 15) attempted coup shocked Turkey, a country that has seen four governments toppled by the military since 1960. Thousands of soldiers, police, and officials have been detained or sacked. Turkey's Western allies have expressed concern and urged President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to respond in a measured way. We spoke to women about the mood in the country today.” ([BBC](#))

### **July 21: The women of Turkey’s anti-coup protests**

“When Serife Boz, 50, heard a coup was seeking to overthrow the Turkish government she jumped inside her truck and drove as many people as possible to the squares across Istanbul to protest the violent putsch. ‘I can drive the truck. I felt that I was going to war. I chanted [the] whole night and the next day,’ said Serife. ‘Me and my children and grandchildren took to [the streets of] Taksim Square,’ she added.” ([Andalou Agency](#))

### **July 23: Violence against women increases in post-coup Turkey**

“The ‘male-dominated, militarist mentality’ dominating Turkish politics is causing a cycle of violence, leaving women with little hope for democracy in the country, declared the women of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) in a statement published Saturday, July 23. HDP’s Women’s Parliament Group issued the statement expressing fear about the violence occurring in Turkey following a failed coup on July 15 and a subsequent purge of the military and civil society as Ankara sought to eradicate all alleged coup-supporters.” ([Rudaw](#))

## **United Arab Emirates**

### **July 22: Emirati women reach for the stars and beyond**

“Aeronautical engineering, nuclear energy and space technologies are not the first careers most young Emirati women consider when thinking about their future. But that is increasingly the case for a new generation as the UAE continues to work towards securing its post-oil future.” ([The National](#))

### **July 31: Women facing violence have hope in Dubai**

“Every day, hundreds of women all over the world suffer in similar silence and terror, deeply hurt in the shadow of spousal abuse and violence. Their daily struggle and pain are often kept behind closed doors because of the fear of stigma and social shame. It is here that the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children (DFWAC), a not-for-profit organisation, is doing sterling service and steadily breaking such barriers by guaranteeing full support to victims, including rehabilitation, safety and privacy.” ([Gulf News](#))

## **Yemen**

### **July 18: Yemen’s only hope for lasting peace (Op-Ed by Rasha Jarhum)**

“Three rounds of peace talks have so far failed to bring an end to the devastating conflict in Yemen. While the violence continues, consuming the lives of innocent people with catastrophic humanitarian consequences, the UN Envoy is struggling to revive the talks after a two-week pause. Throughout all of this, there is a missing force that could save thousands in my country: women.” ([The Huffington Post](#))

## **General**

### **July 29: Muslim female athletes find sport so essential they compete while covered**

“On a perfectly breathable Friday near sunset in the spring, you might have spotted what residents say you never would have spotted 10 years ago: women, here and there, on the pathways that twist near a sports park, walking briskly or jogging, in their abayas.” ([The Washington Post](#))

**August 1: The Girl Who Beat ISIS: My Story review- inside the horror of ISIS**

“This terrible story is told in the first person, transcribed from lengthy interviews conducted by a German journalist, Andrea C Hoffmann, while Farida was living in a refugee camp near Dohuk in Iraq. Hoffmann met Farida a few weeks after she and five other girls managed to escape from an Isis military camp near the Omar gas field in eastern Syria, where they had been kept prisoner in shipping containers.” ([The Guardian](#))

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