

# MENA Women's News Brief

June 2-16, 2014

## **June 2: (Op-Ed) The Female Challenge of North Africa and the Middle East**

“Gender still remains an area of great concern for harnessing the full productive potential of the North African and Middle Eastern Woman when it comes to the work place. Women's participation in the labour force, and in paid employment has maintained an upward trend in almost all regions of the world at 56.6%. Unfortunately however, this is not matched in the MENA region: with the rate remaining stubborn at 32%, the lowest level among all regions. Why this low percentage? And what factors need to be considered in creating better access to jobs?” ([Al-Bawaba](#))

## **June 15: New initiative aims to empower Arab women**

“A group of organizations throughout the Arab world, in cooperation with Oxfam Novib, has launched a project to increase women's participation in politics.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **Bahrain**

## **June 9: Women's vital role in Bahrain's development praised**

“The Deputy King [Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa] commended the council's [Supreme Council for Women in Bahrain] comprehensive range of initiatives for women, including political, economic, social empowerment, and family and professional support, in addition to youth awareness programmes.” ([Gulf Daily News](#))

### **Egypt**

## **June 5: Women in parliament**

“In the course of a symposium on the role of women during the presidential elections, held at the Opera House on 31 May, the National Council for Women (NCW) rejected the draft law on parliamentary elections. The proposed legislation, said NCW head Mervat Al-Tellawi, compromises Egypt's image in the international community by failing to guarantee ‘proper representation for women in parliament.’ Nor, she added, does it take into account ‘the capabilities, potential and ambitions of women after the 25 January and 30 June revolutions.’” ([Al-Ahram Weekly](#))

## **June 5: Egypt criminalizes sexual harassment**

“[Outgoing] President Adly Mansour issued the country's first law that explicitly uses the term ‘sexual harassment,’ a statement from his office reads. The law makes the offense punishable by up to five years in prison and a maximum fine of 50,000 Egyptian pounds.” ([Al-Ahram](#))

## **June 15: Demonstrators rally against sexual harassment**

“Several hundred demonstrators gathered outside the Cairo Opera House on Saturday evening to protest the ongoing phenomenon of sexual harassment and sexual assault on Egyptian streets.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

## **Iran**

### **June 3: 'Bad veiling' a protest against government, says Iran cleric**

“Traditional conservative politician Ali Akbar Nategh Nouri has called ‘poor veiling’ a form of protest against the government and said that the causes of the issue should be studied rather than confronted by police.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **June 9: Iranian women’s rights activist, filmmaker summoned to Evin**

“Evin Prison has summoned Mahnaz Mohammadi, the Iranian filmmaker and women's rights activist, to serve out her five-year prison sentence. Mohammadi was sentenced in September of 2012 for ‘assembly and collusion against national security and propaganda against the regime.’” ([Payvand](#))

## **Iraq**

### **June 12: Iraqi women make gains in parliamentary elections**

“During the Iraqi parliamentary elections held April 30, female candidates outperformed many of their male peers and transformed themselves into key players in the electoral scene. In the previous elections, there were 73 female candidates, while on the April 30 elections, there were 83.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

## **Israel**

### **June 4: Knesset member describes Israel's gender wars**

“In an interview, Knesset member Yifat Kariv assures Al-Monitor that she will not give up on advancing women, particularly the ultra-Orthodox, in the Israeli political arena.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **June 6: Bedouin women in Israel stand up to 'The Man'**

“Israel’s first labor union for Bedouin women recently racked up an impressive success. After the union, representing employees of day care centers run by an Arab-Jewish organization, declared a labor dispute, management accepted most of its demands. The employees’ pay was raised from 27 to 29 shekels an hour (\$7.78 to \$8.35), they were given two paid vacations a year, one in spring and one in winter, and a plan to turn them from salaried employees into freelancers was shelved.” ([Haaretz](#))

### **June 9: Cabinet approves plan for advancing women in public service**

“The cabinet gave its unanimous backing Sunday to a five-year plan to encourage the employment of women in the upper ranks of the public service. It includes a provision allowing public service employees with children up to the age of 12 to do overtime from home.” ([Haaretz](#))

## **Libya**

### **June 12: Libya to pay reparations to victims of rape as a war crime**

“A decree issued Wednesday in Libya would recognize rape committed during that country’s revolution as a war crime and pay rape survivors reparations, according to two sources who have worked closely with the Libyan government in developing the policy.” ([Newsweek](#))

## **Oman**

### **June 9: Women get free health check-up in City Centres across Muscat**

“More than 400 women took the initiative to check the health of their hearts over two weekends by visiting the City Centre, Muscat and City Centre, Qurum.” ([Times of Oman](#))

## **Palestinian Territories**

### **June 2: Palestinian women protest Al-Aqsa restrictions**

“Scores of Palestinian women staged on Monday a sit-in at the western gate of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem. They were protesting Israeli police demand that they hand over their ID cards until they finished performing their prayers inside the mosque and come out.” ([Daily Star](#))

### **June 11: Women shut out from Fatah-Hamas reconciliation deal**

“The reconciliation scene in Gaza City and the declaration of an agreement between Fatah and Hamas in April was devoid of women. There were no women invited, from Islamic, secular or leftist parties, to the dialogue table. It was as if such a process were the preserve of men.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **June 6: Only 10% Saudi investors are women**

“Saudi businesswomen and investors continue to devote their efforts and ambitions to leaving their mark on the economic development of the country, despite the obstacles and great difficulties they encounter along the way.” ([Zawya](#))

### **June 15: Women want change in mahram rule**

“A group of Saudi women have complained about the obstacles they face whenever they need to renew their passports. They have urged the relevant authorities to consider allowing women to renew their civil status documents without the need for a male family member's approval or his physical appearance at the respective government entity.” ([Zawya](#))

### **June 16: Saudis strongly favor female Cabinet ministers**

“Calls are mounting for the appointment of women to the Cabinet to further strengthen government's efforts led by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah for women empowerment.” ([Zawya](#))

## **Syria**

### **June 7: Thousands of women raped in war: activists**

“A prominent member of Syria's opposition-in-exile has claimed there have been 7,500 confirmed cases of women being raped during the country's 3-year-old conflict.” ([Daily Star](#))

## **Tunisia**

### **June 5: Young Women's Leadership in Political and Social Development Programme Launched in Tunis**

“Workshops, field studies, meetings and visits are on the agenda. A women's policy centre tasked with promoting women's leadership is also in the pipeline.” ([All Africa](#))

## **UAE**

### **June 10: Interview with first Emirati air force pilot**

“Winning the Mohammad Bin Rashid Excellence Award is a source of motivation and encouragement to achieve more excellence and innovation, said Captain Mariam Hassan Salem Al Mansouri, the first Emirati female pilot to serve in the UAE Air Force.” ([Gulf News](#))

### **June 11: Emirati women hailed at economy forum in London**

“The 3rd Arab Women in the Global Economy forum, held in London, saw strong Emirati participation, with participants recognising the role of UAE businesswomen as entrepreneurs.” ([Gulf Today](#))

**June 11: New ladies-only beach opens in Abu Dhabi**

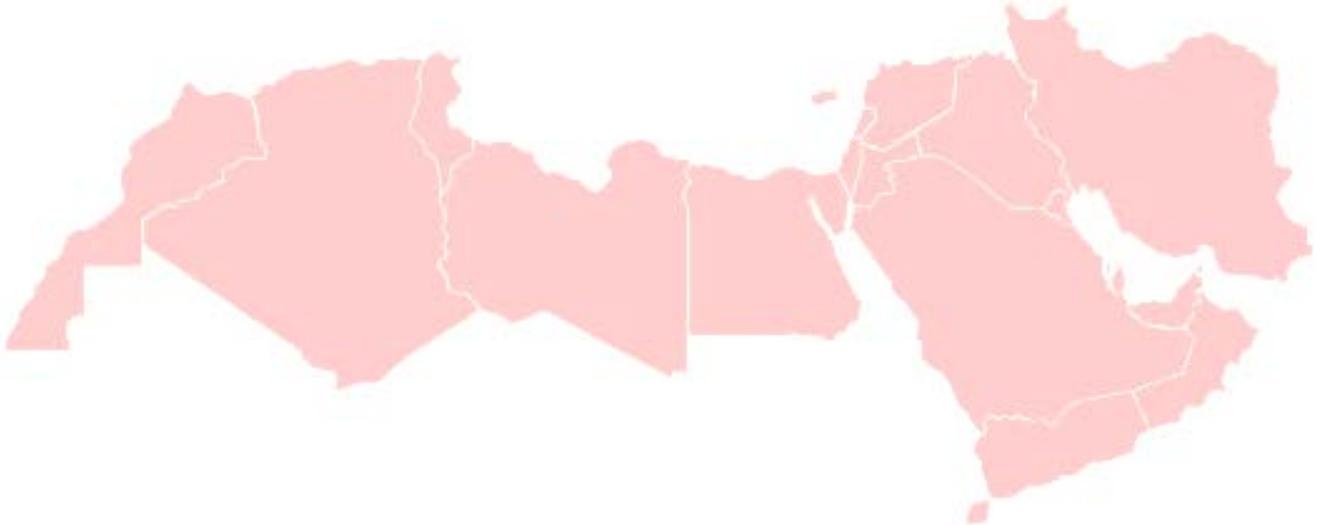
“From Thursday onwards, hundreds of women who have long been waiting for a secluded beach in the capital can visit the dedicated ladies-only section at Al Bateen Beach, the Municipality of Abu Dhabi City said.” ([Gulf News](#))

**June 11: Emirati women to raise voice against sexual violence in conflicts**

“Emirati women will join global efforts to end sexual violence in conflicts as part of a three-day summit in London that ends on Thursday.” ([Gulf News](#))

**June 15: UAE stresses importance of fighting violence against women**

“Ambassador Obaid Salem Al Zaabi, UAE’s Permanent Representative to UN and other International Organisations in Geneva, has stressed that the UAE takes special interest in combating the violence against women, being a blatant violation to women’s dignity.” ([Gulf Today](#))



By Samaa Ahmed



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

Follow the Middle East Program on Twitter @WilsonCenterMEP  and Facebook 