

MENA Women News Brief

June 20, 2016-July 5, 2016

Algeria

June 28: Algeria: CNCPPDH Laments Persistence of Violence Against Women

“The different initiatives undertaken by the government to fight against the violence against women were unable to put an end to this scourge which is still ‘persisting’ and ‘intensifying,’ said the National Advisory Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CNCPPDH) in its annual report.” ([All Africa](#))

Bahrain

June 23: Women’s groups accuse Bahrain of cutting funds on political grounds

“Al-Nahda Bahrain is one of 13 women’s rights groups in Bahrain’s Women’s Union, which has been ravaged by funding cuts. Five other NGOs, which deal with issues including professional development and corruption, have all been hit. Civil society workers say the cuts are a targeted political attack on their work.” ([Middle East Eye](#))

Egypt

June 23: Breaking through: women pioneers in Egypt’s technology sector

“It is often assumed that the world of technology is a scene dominated by men. Despite this stereotype, women have made headway and carved out their own niche in this field often monopolised by men. The presence of women working in the field of technology is not unheard of, and there are some women who have developed a namesake thanks to their technological inventions. Daily News Egypt has compiled some of the top success stories of women working in technology.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

June 27: Egypt Detains, Deports Prominent Female TV Host

“Egyptian authorities on Monday, June 27 detained and deported a famous TV host whose program had been critical of the government’s policies, including its crackdown on freedom of speech, her lawyer and officials said. Liliane Daoud was taken from her house to an undisclosed location, Zyad el-Elaimy said. Daoud hosted a talk show on ONTV, a private network that has adopted a less critical editorial line since Ahmed Abou Hashima, a pro-government businessman, purchased it last month.” ([ABC News](#))

June 27: Egypt bans activist from travelling to women’s rights conference

“An Egyptian activist was prevented from flying to Beirut for a women’s rights conference on Monday, June 27 after passport control officials told her she was banned from travelling, her organization said. Mozn Hassan, director of a group called Nazra for Feminist Studies, was barred from flying due to her alleged involvement in a high-profile case in which authorities have accused non-governmental organizations of receiving foreign funds with the aim of sowing chaos, Nazra said in a statement.” ([Al Arabiya](#))

Iran

July 2: Iranian Women Push for More Open Stadiums

“Iranian women reported that they were being barred from attending a major volleyball tournament featuring the Olympic-bound men’s national team, reigniting a debate about whether Iran should be allowed to host international matches. After a commitment from volleyball’s world governing body that women would be able to attend this weekend’s World League tournament at the Azadi Sport Complex in

Tehran, Iranian women who have pushed to make sporting events more open say they have not been able to buy tickets online despite repeated efforts.” ([The New York Times](#))

June 2: How Iranian Women Are Protesting Against the Country’s Strict Dress Code

“Iran is home to perhaps the most strictly enforced dress code in the world. In the capital, Tehran, thousands of Gashte Ershad, or morality police—both in uniform and plainclothes—patrol the streets, looking for men with flashy jewelry or certain haircuts and women in form-fitting clothes or loose hijabs, which are required by law to be worn at all times.” ([VICE](#))

Iraq

June 29: The Sun Force: Life on the Frontlines With the Peshmerga’s Female Fighters

“Late last year, Captain Khatoon Ali Krdr, 36, the commander of an all-female Kurdish Peshmerga unit, visited a family in the village of Kocho in northern Iraqi Kurdistan to see a woman who’d had nearly everything taken away by the Islamic State (ISIS). Like Khatoon, the woman and her surviving family members are Yezidis, an ethno-religious Kurdish minority group. ISIS has long enslaved, tortured, and killed, Yezidi women. Khatoon tried to speak to the woman, but she could not answer. These days, she is mute and can only stare ahead.” ([Foreign Affairs](#))

Israel

June 22: Women of the Wall Is a Diversion From the Real Issue: The Occupation (Op-Ed by Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi)

“I am truly glad that observant women have won some rights in the synagogue, and are counted in many prayer quorums, but for me, as for Burg, that battle is another way for women to keep each other quiet about the real challenge to all Jews in our time: The direction that Judaism has taken in the State of Israel that will surely lead us all to destruction.” ([Haaretz](#))

June 23: Israeli Women to Be Allowed to Bathe in Mikvehs Without an Attendant

“Women will now be able to bathe in ritual baths, mikvehs, without an attendant, the Chief Rabbinate said Wednesday, June 22, responding to a petition submitted by a women’s group to the High Court of Justice. The Rabbinate retracted its original stance against the move to let women do their monthly ritual bathing without an attendant. This represented a victory for the women after a three-year battle.” ([Haaretz](#))

June 29: Israeli Army to Start Interviewing Women for Combat Roles

“In about two months’ time, the Israel Defense Forces will start screening women in their pre-draft interview to see if they are suitable for combat units. Until now, such interviews were held only for men. The IDF’s manpower directorate decided to launch a pilot project in September that will include some 1,500 women whose medical profiles make them suitable for combat units.” ([Haaretz](#))

July 5: Israeli woman gets 22 months for trying to join Islamic State

“The Haifa District Court on Tuesday, July 5 sentenced an Israeli-Arab mother of five to 22 months in prison for trying to join the Islamic State group in Syria, where she wanted to teach jihadist ideology to new recruits. Iman Ahmed Mohamed Kanjou, 44, a teacher from the northern city of Shfaram, was convicted in a plea bargain of contacting an enemy agent and illegally leaving the country.” ([Times of Israel](#))

Kuwait

June 27: Mogherini meets Syrian opposition women delegation

“EU High Representative Federica Mogherini met in Brussels Monday, June 27 the Syrian High Negotiations Committee’s (HNC) Women Consultative Committee to exchange views on developments in Syria and the political process.” ([Kuwait News Agency](#))

Lebanon

June 28: Lebanese women in Christian village carry guns after suicide blasts

“Several women have taken up arms after two waves of deadly suicide bombings in a Lebanese Christian village on Monday, June 27, pictures show. News of the bombings, which took place in two waves on Monday, killing five people, have shaken tiny Lebanon, which borders war-torn Syria. The first group of bombers attacked before dawn and the second later at night, two of them blowing themselves up near a church.” ([Al Arabiya](#))

Libya

July 1: Ten women die in refugee boat accident off Libyan coast

“Ten women have died in a new migrant boat accident off the coast of Libya in the Mediterranean Sea, Italian authorities said, as they began the gruesome task of removing hundreds of corpses from another salvaged wreck. The women were found dead in the bottom of a partially submerged dinghy, said Italian coastguard spokesman Captain Cosimo Nicastro. Crew aboard the Italian coastguard patrol boat, the Diciotti, managed to rescue 107 of the people trapped on the sinking dinghy.” ([Al Jazeera](#))

July 4: Libya cannot afford to forget its women (Op-Ed by Ekram El-Huni and Hala Bugaighis)

“As the world news continued to flow through social media of Brexit (the UK’s vote to exit the EU), Euro 2016, and a whole host of regional and global developments, we Libyans continuously search for ways not to be forgotten or at least viewed simply as the next failed Arab state with three simultaneous governments.” ([Libya Herald](#))

Morocco

June 27: Visa Ban and Misrepresentation of Moroccan Women in the Gulf (Op-Ed by Rawiya Ouedghiri Hassani)

“Earlier in April, as I was applying for my visa to the United Arab Emirates, I was overjoyed that I will be reunited with my friends and family members whom I have missed dearly since my departure from the UAE in 2015. I used to study there and I hold a special regard to the country and its people, where I have great memories, and most importantly where I have accumulated a great deal of knowledge as part of my college journey. Yet, I was shocked by the reply of the agency I had registered with.” ([Morocco World News](#))

June 28: US First Lady Promotes learning to Empower Moroccan Girls

“U.S. first lady Michelle Obama met with Moroccan teenage girls on Tuesday, June 28 to promote education in the North African kingdom, where only 36 percent of girls continue school beyond the primary level.” ([ABC News](#))

Palestinian Territories

June 22: Study: Women’s Press Became More Capable of Raising Issues on Women’s Rights

“The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms ‘MADA’ has issued a study on women’s press and freedom of opinion and expression in Palestine. The study aimed to shed light on women’s press from competent institutions of women’s issues and rights in Palestine, and their contribution to

promoting freedom of expression and the obstacles encountered, through providing in-depth a picture on how to address women's issues by a group of competent media organizations.” ([Palestine News Network](#))

Qatar

June 21: Qatar court upholds human trafficking conviction after woman dies

“A Palestinian man convicted of human trafficking and involuntary manslaughter will petition Qatar’s highest court after failing to get his case thrown out in appeals, his lawyer has said.” ([Doha News](#))

Saudi Arabia

June 20: Saudi Arabian Women Love Bumper Cars (But Not for Bumping)

“At the weekly ladies-only night at the Al Shallal Theme Park in the coastal city of Jeddah, women discard head scarves and head-to-toe black gowns to reveal the latest trends—ripped jeans, tank tops, and tossed-to-the-side '80s-style hair. For many of them, the biggest draw of the amusement park isn't the few hours of fashion freedom. Instead, they go there to get behind the wheel—even a bumper-car wheel—in a country that bans female drivers.” ([The Wall Street Journal](#))

June 21: Saudi Delegation Argues Women's Rights on the Upswing

“Human rights groups have for years criticized Saudi Arabia for its treatment of women. The most recent U.S. State Department report on human rights said ‘persuasive gender discrimination and lack of equal rights’ affected all aspects of women's lives. But some women visiting Washington as part of a Saudi delegation point to some progress and insist that more change is on the horizon.” ([Voice of America](#))

June 23: What Would Self-Driving Cars Mean for Women in Saudi Arabia? (Op-Ed by Sarah Aziza)

“I was carpooling to a meeting by hitching a ride with an acquaintance whose route happened to pass near my home. Yet, the arrangement was far from straightforward. Our event would not begin until evening, and I would have to accompany my friend home and loiter for several awkward hours before her private driver dispatched us to the meeting. Cumbersome as all this would be, I felt lucky to have found a ride at all. Women in Saudi Arabia are unable to drive, and that evening my father—the only male of legal age in our family—was working late.” ([Slate](#))

June 27: Here's why Saudi Arabia is loosening its restrictions on women (Op-Ed by Yu-Ming Liou and Paul Musgrace)

“Conventional wisdom says Vision 2030 is driven by low oil prices and soaring military expenditures caused by Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen. The moves to liberalize Saudi society, by contrast, are often explained as springing from generational turnover or a gradual evolution in social attitudes. Separating fiscal and social policies in that way, however, overlooks how the kingdom's finances and its policies toward women are linked.” ([The Washington Post](#))

July 4: First women's only telecom complex to be set up in Kingdom

“A group of Saudi investors in Riyadh are to set up the first women only telecom complex in the Kingdom soon. This is largely due to the efforts of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development supporting Saudization in the telecommunications sector, Saudi Press Agency reported Sunday, July 3.” ([Saudi Gazette](#))

Syria

June 22: Woman protests ISIS by discarding her veil and headscarf

“‘This outfit is a fraud, it is a deception,’ Radi Suleiman says in the video as she removes the black veil that had been covering her face almost entirely, except for a thin opening exposing her eyes. ‘When it became obligatory and enforced, it became despised,’ she says, holding the veil out in front of her and looking at it with contempt.” ([The New York Times](#))

June 23: Female Journalists Barred From Covering Religious Event

“Female journalists were barred from entering the great Mosque of Kairouan to cover the ceremony marking the 1,450 anniversary of the writing of the Qu’ran. The ceremony took place at the Uqba Ibn Nafi Mosque in Kairouan, the oldest Mosque in North Africa and the founding Mosque of Islam in Tunisia. The event, sponsored by the Ministry of Religious Affairs featured a number of readers, amongst them, current Head of Government, Habib Essid.” ([Tunisia Live](#))

June 27: Syria’s war: Women risk death to give birth in Aleppo

“Government air strikes across rebel-held Aleppo and the deliberate targeting of medical facilities present yet another deadly challenge for pregnant women and newborn infants in the besieged city. The aerial attacks across rebel-held Aleppo have decimated the obstetric care infrastructure that was once available to pregnant women in Syria.” ([Al Jazeera](#))

July 2: Textile project helps Syrian refugee women overcome financial difficulties

“A textile project in Turkey is helping Syrian women earn some extra money. But demand for the scarves, hats and toys the refugees produce has slowed and now their income is falling. These Syrian women are using their skills in knitting and crocheting to make some much-needed money. They produce scarves, hats, toys and other textiles to sell online.” ([Rudaw](#))

Tunisia

June 28: Tunisia moves closer to achieving gender equality in politics

“Tunisia’s Parliament has approved an amendment ensuring that women have greater representation in local politics. This amendment, which applies to both municipal and regional elections, includes a proposal for ‘horizontal and vertical’ gender parity in Article 49 of the electoral law.” ([UN Women](#))

Turkey

June 22: Report: “Violence against women in Turkey is not a domestic issue”

“Global Policy and Strategy has released its annual report entitled ‘Report on Violence against Women in Turkey’ for the year 2015. In the report, a total of 908 incidents of violence against women, in which 1280 victims and 1177 perpetrators were involved, were elaborated on in light of the news that appeared in local and national newspapers, news websites and agencies.” ([Turkish Weekly](#))

June 23: Why Turkish women are rallying behind this killer (Op-Ed by Sibel Hurtas)

“Cilem Dogan has been in the news in Turkey since turning herself in after murdering her husband last July. Led away by police in handcuffs, the young woman gave two thumbs up to reporters and shouted, ‘Why should women always die!’ In a country where the murder of women has skyrocketed in recent years, Dogan’s gesture became a singular act of defiance and inspired others to speak out.” ([Al Monitor](#))

June 26: Turkey's first lady meets businesswomen to support girls' education

“Turkish first lady Emine Erdoğan and the country's leading businesswomen gathered for an iftar meal in Istanbul to mark a range of initiatives which contributed to raising the rate of girls in school to 95 percent across Anatolia.” ([Hurriyet Daily News](#))

United Arab Emirates

June 28: UAE jails Emirati woman on charges of spying for Hezbollah

“An Abu Dhabi court has jailed the wife of a prominent Emirati for 10 years after convicting her of spying for Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement, local media reported on Tuesday, June 28. The Emirati woman of Lebanese origin was found guilty of ‘handing over classified information about top leaders, including how political and economic decisions are made at the highest authorities in the country, to two members of the intelligence wing of Hezbollah,’ Gulf News reported.” ([Times of Israel](#))

Yemen

June 21: Al Qaida in Yemen disguise as women to escape arrest

“In the city of Al Mukalla, southern Yemen, local security services were clued in on a group of Al Qaida militants hiding in a house the neighbourhood of Fowa. Commanders ordered highly trained forces to raid the suspected house and nail the militants. There were several militants but they were all found to be dressed in women's clothes.” ([Gulf News](#))

June 23: Photo Essay: A Year in Crisis for Yemen's Women

“The fighting that began in Sana'a, Yemen, in March 2015 quickly escalated into a civil war and national humanitarian crisis. Today, the conflict affects 21 of Yemen's 22 governorates. The scale and scope of humanitarian needs remains staggering, with 21.2 million people requiring some form of humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs or protect their fundamental rights.” ([News Deeply](#))

General

June 22: Meet the women helping build the tech industry in the Middle East

“In the west, Middle East reporting is often focused on disaster. With much of the region in varying degrees of conflict and chaos, it's easy to overlook any other more positive developments. While Lebanon itself isn't at war, it has seen a huge influx of refugees from neighbouring Syria, with as much as a third of the population now made up by displaced people. ‘Games are an escape, a way to have fun,’ says Lara Noujaim. ‘But for us in Lebanon, games are also used as a distraction from frustration at events in the country.’” ([The Guardian](#))

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