

# **MENA Women's News Brief**

## **March 11-24, 2014**

### **Egypt**

#### **March 14: Egypt launches first prosecution for female genital mutilation after girl dies**

“A doctor will stand trial for the first time in Egypt on charges of female genital mutilation (FGM), after a 13-year-old girl died following an alleged operation in his clinic last year. In a landmark case, Dr. Raslan Fadl is the first doctor to be prosecuted for FGM in Egypt, where the practice was banned in 2008, but is still widely accepted and carried out by many doctors in private.” ([The Guardian](#))

#### **March 17: Cairo university student sexually harassed by mob on campus**

“University head says incident is first ever on campus, a claim refuted by anti-harassment campaigners, who say dozens of women have been harassed at Cairo University.” ([Ahram Online](#))

#### **March 20: AP Interview: Egyptian fights for women's equality**

“A year ago, Egyptian politician and women's rights activist Mervat Tallawy defied the Muslim Brotherhood to spearhead the adoption of a U.N. blueprint to combat violence against women. Now she's back campaigning against conservatives to ensure that equality for women remains at the top of the U.N. agenda.” ([Washington Post](#))

### **Iran**

#### **March 18: Iran says woman sentenced to stoning given "leave" from prison**

“An Iranian woman sentenced to die by stoning for adultery and later given a 10-year jail term instead has been allowed to leave prison, the judiciary said, in a new twist to a case that has triggered years of criticism of Iran's rights record.” ([Daily Star Lebanon](#))

### **Israel**

#### **March 12: Plight of Jewish 'chained women' trapped in broken marriage**

“In Jewish society, there are estimated to be thousands of women in broken marriages where their husband refuses to give them the necessary religious document enabling a divorce. In some cases, the wife can remain trapped in the situation for years, unable to remarry or move on.” ([BBC News](#))

### **Lebanon**

#### **March 11: Lebanese women still face discrimination**

“While Lebanese society considers itself developed — in terms of women's status and rights — compared to other societies, the truth reveals that there is a large gender pay gap in many sectors. In the industrial sector this gap hits 23%, while it is 21% in the agricultural sector, 10% in the trade sector, and nearly 38% in the transport sector and the postal and telecommunications services sector. However, the pay gap falls to 6% in the financial and brokerage services and insurance sectors. To sum up, according to the Survey of the Household Living Conditions 2007, which was issued by the Central Administration of Statistics, the gender pay gap in all sectors is 6%.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **March 16: Lebanese fisherwomen fight to stay afloat**

“Despite the challenges of working in a male-dominated profession, along with lawsuits aimed at evicting them from their seaside homes, Lebanon’s fisherwomen remain resilient.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **Libya**

#### **March 11: ‘Libyan women should have the same rights as men’**

“Samira Massoudi, the President of the Libyan Women’s Union in Tripoli, spearheaded the campaign for a women’s quota in recent elections to the Constitutional Assembly but says there are still further challenges to face in the fight for women’s rights.” ([Saudi Gazette](#))

#### **March 19: Libyan Women Speak Up For Constitutional Rights**

“During the 2011 Libyan revolution the world witnessed women from all backgrounds taking to the streets in towns and cities across the country, as well as the flourishing of thousands of women-led non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, the armed clashes between rival militias, crime and kidnappings, bombings and assassinations that have become almost routine in post-revolution Libya, territory, women have been forced to take a step backwards.” ([Independent European Daily Press](#))

### **Morocco**

#### **March 16: Gender Inequality in Morocco Continues, Despite Amendments to Family Law**

“A decade ago, Morocco adopted a family code hailed by women’s rights groups as a big step forward. Three years ago, the country passed a new constitution guaranteeing gender equality. Even so, Moroccan women say that equality is still a long way off, and much of the old order remains untouched, including the inheritance law section of the family code. That law, laid down in the Quran, states that male relatives receive double the inheritance of women.” ([NY Times](#))

### **Oman**

#### **March 16: Women play greater role in Oman public and private sector**

“Statistics show that women’s numbers in the public sector has jumped from 29,218 in 2003 to 68,200 in 2012. In the private sector 35,248 women were employed in 2012 against 13,383 in 2003.” ([Middle East Online](#))

#### **March 23: Oman's Dr. Fawzia elected to top Inter-Parliamentary Union post**

“Dr Fawzia Al Farsiyah was elected as the deputy chair of the Coordination Committee of Women Parliamentarians in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva.” ([Times of Oman](#))

### **Palestinian Territories**

#### **March 12: Palestinian activists press Abbas to outlaw honor crimes**

“Palestinian women marked International Women’s Day with a protest in front of the presidential headquarters in Ramallah. They also presented a memorandum to President Mahmoud Abbas calling for the adoption of a draft penal code and a law on domestic violence.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **Saudi Arabia**

#### **March 12: Saudi activist calls for women’s ministry**

“‘I see there is a need for a ministry that cares for the women and the family in general,’ Dr. Maha Al Muneef, founder and executive director of the National Family Safety Program in Saudi Arabia, said. ‘The role of women in the upbringing of children, the backbone of this country, is very significant and

the marginalization of the development role of women in any country is one of the most important impediments to progress.”” ([Gulf News](#))

## **Syria**

### **March 11: Syria sparks surge in human trafficking**

“Human trafficking in Lebanon reached record levels last year, according to the head of the Internal Security Force's Vice Squad, with the number of victims expected to rise further as the war in neighboring Syria continues.”” ([Daily Star Lebanon](#))

### **March 12: Syrian women refugees humiliated, exploited in Turkey**

“Many female Syrian refugees in Turkey endure sexual harassment and exploitation by employers, prospective husbands and male kin.”” ([Al-Monitor](#))

## **Tunisia**

### **March 13: Prostitutes join battle for women's rights in Tunisia**

“A protest held by Tunisian prostitutes demanding the reopening of their brothel demonstrates that the situation for women in Tunisia is different than what is expected in an Islamic country, and women will continue their struggle.”” ([Al-Monitor](#))

## **UAE**

### **March 15: Sheikha Fatima vows to enhance gender equality in the UAE**

“The General Women’s Union has vowed to continue efforts to enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women across the UAE. The announcement came in a statement from Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, chairwoman of the General Women’s Union, supreme chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation and president of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood.”” ([The National](#))

### **March 16: ‘Women’s Law’ would be a step forward for UAE (Op-Ed)**

“Earlier this month, The National reported on moves by the Federal National Council (FNC) to pass a women’s law as a natural progression from the recently enacted Child Rights Law. FNC member Ali Jassim, from Umm Al Quwain, suggested that the women’s law ‘mainly focus on domestic violence against women and touch on a lot of other aspects related to women’. While the issue of domestic violence is an extremely important one, there are good reasons to make any new law as broad as possible.”” ([The National](#))

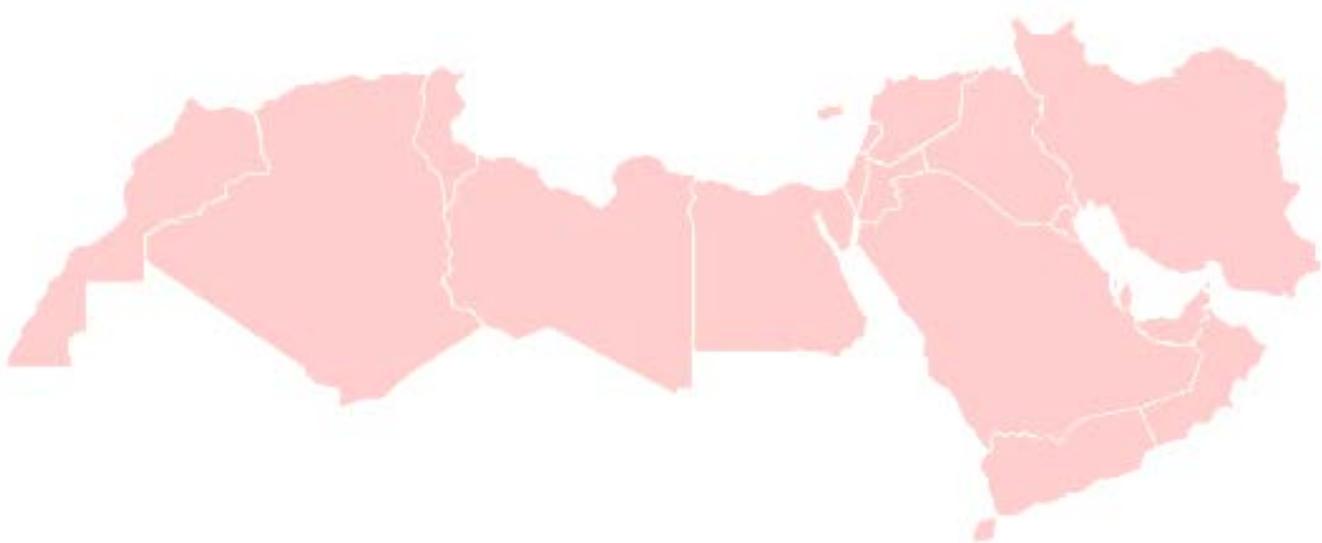
### **March 16: Abu Dhabi Executive Council Appoints First Female Member**

“UAE President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan has appointed the country’s first female member to the Abu Dhabi Executive Council. Amal Al Qubaisi, a Federal National Council (FNC) member and the new general manager of Abu Dhabi Education Council (Adec), was also the first woman to be elected to the FNC in 2006. Al Qubaisi, 43, is an architect by profession and was the Emirates’ first female to chair one of the meetings at the FNC.”” ([Gulf Business](#))

### **March 22: Women in UAE told to demand their right for workplace nurseries**

The Ministry of Social Affairs is urging working mothers to insist on crèches in government offices. Moza Al Shoomi, head of the children’s department at the Ministry of Social Affairs, said female employees had the full backing of the Vice President in demanding a workplace childcare center...it is

expected that a nurseries bill that is about to be passed to the FNC would actually force Government bodies to open crèches.” ([The National](#))



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