

MENA Women's News Brief

March 25-April 7, 2014

Bahrain

March 28: Poll training for female candidates

“Almost 40 women have already come forward to run in this year's municipal and parliamentary elections. The women, who are all aged over 30, are being tutored by institute election preparation expert and Shura Council legislative and legal affairs committee chairwoman Dalal Al Zayed.” ([Gulf Daily News](#))

March 31: Bahrain ranks high in women empowerment

“Bahrain ranked second with regards to the percentage of women in civil service top management among countries in the Middle East and North Africa and first in the presence of women in middle management in the public sector among Arab countries, according to a report by the MENA program at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development for 2013 and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research.” ([Khaleej Times](#))

Egypt

March 25: Egypt is falling short of UN women's rights standards: Al-Tallawi

“Egypt has achieved little regarding the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of promoting gender equality, said National Council for Women (NCW) Chairman Mervat Al-Tallawi.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

March 28: North African Women and SMEs - An Opportunity Hiding in Plain View

“According to Leila Farah El-Mokaddem, the African Development Bank's new Resident Representative in Egypt, ‘the economic empowerment of women is a hidden opportunity for our continent. Women constitute what we call “smart economics.” By expanding income generation to both women and men, families are collectively better off, while the economy is more productive resulting in an overall win-win situation.’” ([All Africa](#))

April 5: World Bank loans Egypt \$300m to grow small businesses

“The World Bank's loan, called the Promoting Innovation for Inclusive Financial Access Project, aims to reach more than 130,000 micro and small enterprises, 37% of which are owned by women.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

Iran

March 26: Women can play larger role in Iranian economy

“Iran is facing a socioeconomic issue in women's unemployment. According to an article published in the March 2014 issue of Iran Economics, only 13% of the workforce consists of women and the latest official statistics for women's unemployment stands at 15.6%, though unofficial unemployment figures for this group is 38.3%. Furthermore, only 9.2% of the entrepreneurs in Iran are women.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

March 30: Gingerly, Iran begins to rock out

“Iranian musicians break new ground with women singing on stage and a playlist of Western pop songs sung in English during performances of 'The Last Days of March' in Tehran, Iran. Musicians and actors say that Iran's culture space has opened up noticeably under the centrist President Hassan Rouhani, who was elected last year.” ([Christian Science Monitor](#))

April 3: Roya Saberi Negad Nobakht Held In Iran For 'Insulting Islam' On Facebook

“Concerns are growing for a British woman imprisoned in Iran after her husband said he feared she was facing execution... She has been charged with ‘insulting Islamic sanctities’, a crime that can carry the death penalty, and is being held in the notoriously harsh Evin prison in Teheran.” ([The Telegraph](#))

April 6: Iran’s budget setback for women’s issues

“A proposed amendment that offered homemakers without a job outside the house health insurance has been omitted in Iran's budget” this year. ([Al-Monitor](#))

April 7: The rising price of love in Iran

“The rising financial cost of marriage - of which *jahaziye*h is just one component - have caused many young couples to forgo the affair altogether. A 2009 study by the Research Group for Social Ills at Shahid Beheshti University revealed that staggering financial requirements have contributed to a 70% decline in young Iranians’ desire to wed.” ([The Guardian](#))

Israel

March 31: Survey: 42% of employers prefer not to hire Arab men [and 22% prefer not to hire Arab women]

“The poll, which was conducted by the [Israeli] ministry’s Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and surveyed 500 people, found that 37% of all employers preferred not hire Haredi men and that 22% felt the same about educated Arab women.” ([Haaretz](#))

Jordan

April 1: Amman conference focuses on women in conflict zones

“A regional conference aiming to address social and women's issues in conflict-ridden areas kick started Tuesday in Jordan's capital Amman.” ([Al-Ahram](#))

April 6: Women fall behind with economic participation, exceed in other fields in Jordan

“The rate of economic participation of women in Jordan is among the lowest in the world, standing in sharp contrast to the ‘impressive’ achievements related to the country’s human development record over the past three decades, a World Bank report said.” ([Zawya](#))

Lebanon

March 31: Hariri backs domestic violence law

“Former Prime Minister Saad Hariri said Monday that his Future Movement would back a draft law to protect women from domestic violence that is due to be voted on in Parliament.” ([Daily Star Lebanon](#))

April 1: Parliament passes domestic violence law amid controversy

The Lebanese “Parliament Tuesday approved a long awaited draft law aimed at protecting women from domestic violence as it tackled several other controversial pieces of legislation amid protests by several groups.” ([Daily Star Lebanon](#))

April 3: Study says women face long battle for equality in Lebanon

“Lebanon has a long and tough path ahead to ensure gender equality, or even basic legal protection for women, according to a comprehensive study on the situation in the country released Wednesday.” ([Daily Star Lebanon](#))

Kuwait

March 27: Kuwait minister in a spot over ‘males only’ ad

“Kuwait’s justice minister has been given one week to pull out a newspaper advertisement to recruit only men for a position within the ministry if he wanted to avoid being questioned.” ([Gulf News](#))

March 30: Woman MP pledges to quiz justice minister

“A female Kuwaiti lawmaker has vowed to question the justice minister about a decision not to hire women as legal researchers despite a statement by Kuwait’s Supreme Judiciary Council explaining that the move was only temporary.” ([Gulf News](#))

Palestinian Territories

April 2: How The Middle East Is Solving the Gender Gap That Silicon Valley Is Ignoring

“Only 10% of all Internet entrepreneurs are women. However, experts estimate that the percentage of women Internet entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa region is at 23% and in the Gulf it's 35%.” ([Policy Mic](#))

April 7: First women joining Palestinian commando unit in West Bank

“Women make up just 3 percent of 30,000 members of the Palestinian police and other security agencies in the West Bank, but there's a push to recruit more, said Brig. Rashideh Mughrabi, in charge of gender issues in the National Security Forces.” ([Haaretz](#))

Saudi Arabia

March 25: KSA women seek parity with men

“A leading woman member of the Shura Council has urged the government to provide women parity with men in terms of citizenship rights for their children, retirement benefits and home loans.” ([Zawya](#))

March 29: Obama honors female activist on Saudi Arabia visit

“During his diplomatic trip to Saudi Arabia, U.S. President Barack Obama on Saturday met with Saudi women’s rights activists, among them Maha al-Muneef, a prominent campaigner against domestic violence.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

March 31: KSA to appoint 100 women as paramedics

“Saudi Arabia will appoint 100 Saudi females as the first batch of paramedics by the end of this year, according to Al-Riyadh newspaper on Sunday.” ([Saudi Gazette](#))

March 31: Calls for more women in Saudi Cabinet

“A high-profile member of Saudi’s Shura council has spoken out in favor of more women in Cabinet after Nora bint Abdullah Al Fayez was appointed the country’s first deputy education minister, it was reported.” ([Arabian Business](#))

April 4: Women quit jobs over low wages

“About 42 percent of Saudi women working at female accessory shops in the Kingdom have abandoned their jobs because of low wages, according to a labor expert.” ([Arab News](#))

Syria

March 26: Mobile women’s clinic heads to Syria

“A mobile rapid deployment women’s clinic is heading to Dara'a in Syria to care for female patients and victims of sexual violence, a visiting emergency response official said.” ([Gulf News](#))

March 31: Syria’s Female Refugee Soccer Stars

“At the Zaatari refugee camp, where families try to piece their lives together after fleeing Syria’s civil war, a group of young women are showing that soccer may be the key to bridging violent divides.” ([Daily Beast](#))

April 4: Syrian survivors give voice to the nation's victims

“Every four minutes a Syrian person is detained. Every ten minutes a Syrian person goes missing. Every 13 minutes a Syrian person is wounded. Every 15 minutes a Syrian person is killed, Rania Kisar, founder of the Syrian Women’s Revolution Committee, told the 5th annual Women in the World Summit at the opening panel discussion.” ([The Daily Beast](#))

UAE

March 25: UAE foreign aid policy to include women empowerment

“Shaikha Lubna Al Qasimi, UAE Minister of International Cooperation and Development, said ‘it is critically important that we see women not just as recipients of assistance’ but ‘as agents of change, as brokers of peace, and as deliverers of assistance.’ Shaikha Lubna added that in terms of humanitarian help, women have ‘different and sometimes unique needs, and sometimes markedly different perspectives on how to go about meeting those needs.’ That would be reflected in the UAE’s overall foreign aid policy which is currently under preparation, she added.” ([Gulf News](#))

March 25: Emirati women ‘leading the way in previously male-dominated fields’

“More Emirati women are choosing careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, in a trend that could lead to a 12 per cent economic boost, a report says.” ([The Nation](#))

March 30: Domestic abuse in Abu Dhabi triples in three years

“Prosecutors called for a new law on domestic abuse after it was revealed on Sunday that the number of cases had nearly tripled in three years. The new law would bring all offences involving families under one umbrella, and standardize sentences for offenders.” ([The National](#))

March 30: GE Appoints New President, CEO for The GCC

“Global conglomerate GE announced that it has appointed UAE national Dalya Al Muthanna as the new president and CEO for the Gulf. The first Emirati to be appointed to the senior leadership position, Al

Muthanna will report to Nabil Habayeb, GE's president and CEO for the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey." ([Gulf Business](#))

April 2: Career women in the Gulf: Changing perceptions and experiences

"Between 2011 to 2013 Cambridge Overseas Trust scholar, Mona Hamade, was given unprecedented access to two national banks in the UAE to conduct research for her Ph.D. on 'Gender and Emiratization in the Workforce of the UAE'. The three year doctoral project focused on national, regional and international labor market settings, with a particular focus on issues related to the promotion of gender equality and diversity within organizations." ([Arab News](#))

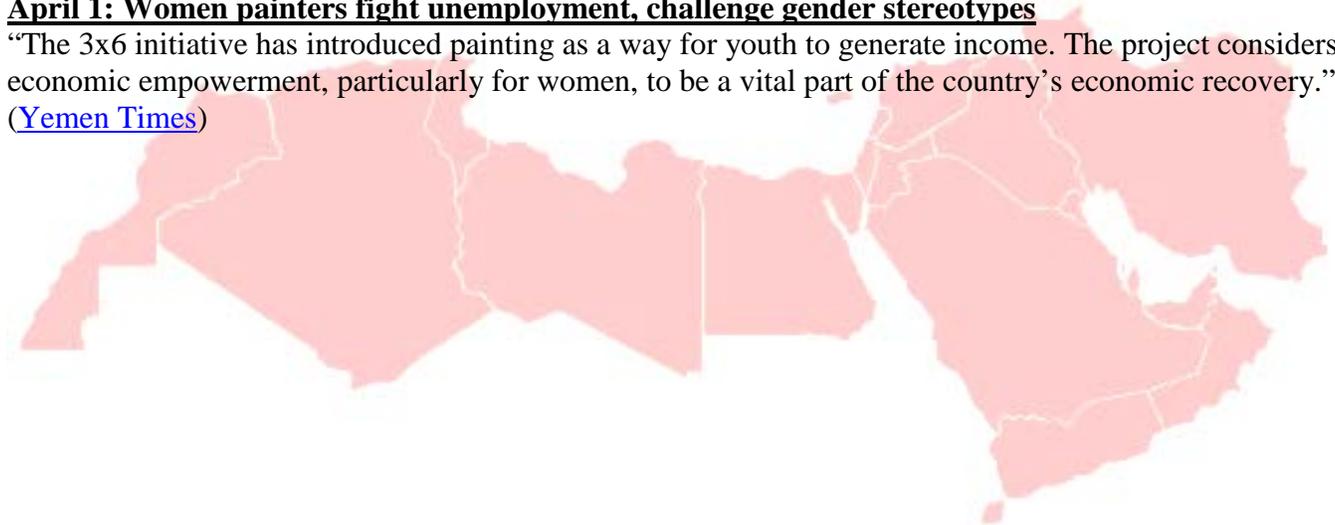
April 7: Women put the fire into firefighting

"Since the induction of the first 24 female officers into Abu Dhabi police on April 22, 1978, the number of women on the force has grown to 3,000. There are no training programs for women who want to become firefighters but this could change in the not so distant future." ([The National](#))

Yemen

April 1: Women painters fight unemployment, challenge gender stereotypes

"The 3x6 initiative has introduced painting as a way for youth to generate income. The project considers economic empowerment, particularly for women, to be a vital part of the country's economic recovery." ([Yemen Times](#))



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