

MENA Women's News Brief

May 20-June 2, 2014

May 20: How female PhD students are driving business growth in the Middle East

“The head of Brunel Business School explains how a new PhD programme is creating a generation of female business leaders and driving a knowledge economy.” ([The Guardian](#))

May 30: Four Arab women make the cut on Forbes power list

“Four women from the Gulf have made the Forbes 100 most powerful women list for 2014.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

Bahrain

May 28: Plan to set up Arab Court for Rights welcomed

“Human rights activists from the region and Arab world have welcomed a proposal to set up the Arab Court for Human Rights, but insisted on giving women a fair representation at all levels, including as judges.” ([Gulf News](#))

Egypt

May 22: Women Council Opposes Proposed Women Representation in Parliament

“The draft law divides Egypt into eight districts, and each district should comprise three women, three Christians, two workers and farmers, two youths, one person with special needs, and an Egyptian expatriate. Women must not be equated with other sectors in the society, because they represent 22 million eligible voters, hence they are a main partner in drafting the country's political future, [Council head Mervat] Talawi said. ([All Africa](#))

May 25: Presidential candidates' vision for Egypt's top issues

“Al-Sisi has long stressed that he ‘loves the Egyptian woman’ and sees her as an integral part of Egypt’s development.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

May 25: Egypt's Women Face A Struggle No Matter Who Comes To Power

“In 2012, Bothaina Kamel became the first woman to run for president in Egypt. She didn't get enough signatures to get on the ballot, but her candidacy became a powerful symbol.” ([NPR](#))

May 27: Women set the tone in Egypt vote

“Women make up around 23 million of Egypt’s overall 53.9 million eligible voters. Middle-aged and older women were in the forefront of the Egyptians, who took part in the three-day protests that resulted in Morsi’s ouster” in July 2013. ([Gulf News](#))

May 31: Amnesty campaigns for jailed Mansoura women

“Amnesty International is monitoring the situation of three Mansoura women who were sentenced to jail [on May 21] ‘solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.’” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

Iraq

May 19: 22 women win in the elections without the need for quota

“The Electoral Commission in Iraq announced 22 woman candidates win in the legislative elections without the need to share the quota” in the 328-seat Council of Representatives. ([Independent Press Agency](#))

Iran

May 26: Women in Iran's factories face hardship, discrimination

“Female factory workers in Iran face many challenges in the workplace, and recent laws encouraging reproduction have made their situations even more difficult.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

May 28: Iranian Women's Magazine Zanan Makes Comeback

“Shahla Sherkat, the award-winning journalist and one of the pioneers of the women's rights movement in Iran, is re-launching on May 29 her feminist magazine shut down by hardliners in 2008 after 16 years in operation. The magazine will reopen under the banner Zanan-e Emruz or ‘Today's Women,’ available in print and online.” ([Thomson Reuters](#))

May 30: Government losing control over veiling, says Khamenei adviser

“Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, also a member of the Iranian Parliament, believes that the government needs a united front to address the issue of veiling and recommended subsidies for factories that produce veils.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

May 30: Iran's baby boom decree prompts fears for women's rights

“Iran's supreme leader has called for a population increase in an edict likely to restrict access to contraception that critics fear could damage women's rights and public health.” ([The Guardian](#))

Israel

June 2: Arab-Israeli olive oil business promotes peace and cultural understanding

“Sindyanna of Galilee, a female-led fair trade association, is working to encourage understanding between Arabs and Jews in Israel by selling local producers' olive oil worldwide and investing 100% of the profits in educating women, bridging cultural divides and promoting organic farming.” ([The Guardian](#))

Jordan

May 23: Jordanian women raise academic bar

“According to UNESCO, overall enrolment of women in Jordanian universities stands at 52% compared to 48% for their male counterparts. The gross enrolment ratio – total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age group for the level or cycle concerned in a given school year – is currently at 41% for women against the men’s 35%.” ([University World News](#))

Morocco

May 28: Western Sahara: Women Together Denounces Moroccan Violations Against Saharawi Women

“Women Together Association has denounced human rights violations carried out by Morocco against Saharawi women, voicing support to their fight for independence of Western Sahara.” ([All Africa](#))

Qatar

May 23: Qatari women nudge their way into office

“They outperform men at every level of education and outnumber them in college classrooms.” ([Gulf News](#))

June 1: ‘Qatar, MENA businesswomen feats need global exposure’

“Shareefa Fadhel, Managing Director and Co-founder of the Roudha Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation believes the achievements of Arab businesswomen across the region need to be highlighted internationally to create a better understanding of their role.” ([Gulf Times](#))

Saudi Arabia

May 24: Saudi women build careers in construction industry

“Rising numbers of Saudi businesswomen have started entering the male-dominated construction industry, according to recent data.” ([Arab News](#))

May 25: Businesswomen take expo-planning market by storm

“Saudi women have swept into the ever-expanding conference and expo-planning domain, now owning around 35 percent of these organizational companies.” ([Arab News](#))

May 26: Experts want women to handle 'sensitive' work

“Security experts, lawyers and some Shoura Council members have demanded that Saudi women be employed in the investigation departments of the security forces, mainly in rape and sexual harassment cases.” ([Zawya](#))

May 27: Quota for women on boards of family businesses urged

“Noting that females constitute 49 percent of the population, only 15 percent of which are working, Maha Fitaihi said the high unemployment rate can be reduced by employing women in different departments of family businesses.” ([Saudi Gazette](#))

May 28: Saudis back women's role in public life

“Asked about their support of women being employed in different jobs... 52 per cent said they support women as diplomats, and 54 per cent support women as ministers, 42 per cent said they support women as member of senior religious scholars, and 48 per cent support women in Sharia (Islamic law) courts.” ([Gulf News](#))

June 2: 65,000 women replace male staff at Saudi accessory shops

“The male staff of over 13,000 women’s accessory shops in Saudi Arabia have been replaced by 65,000 women as part of a job feminization plan at those places.” ([Emirates 24/7](#))

Tunisia

May 25: High rate of unemployment among Youth and women

“When it comes to gender, women are more affected by unemployment than men. In 2012, the unemployment rate for women reached 25.6% against 14.6% rate for men. Women acquiring higher education are much more affected by unemployment than their male counterparts, with respective rates of 43.5% unemployment and 20.9% in the same year.” ([The Tunis Times](#))

UAE

May 20: Women in Leadership (WIL) Economic Forum to highlight gender parity in business

“The forum, which will attract 300 participants, will focus on gender parity in business and the corporate world, and developing economies through the participation of female entrepreneurs... In the Middle East and North Africa, where 95 per cent of private enterprises are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), 2.5 per cent of women are entrepreneurs.” ([Gulf News](#))

May 26: Eight Emirati women on ‘Top Arab Women’ list

“Eight women from the UAE find their place on the list of top 50 Arab Women of 2014 in a survey conducted by Sayidaty magazine.” ([Emirates 24/7](#))

May 30: UAE supports women in education

“The UAE’s support for women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) was discussed at a meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.” ([Gulf News](#))

May 31: Majida Ali Rashid Wins Emirates Women Award

“Assistant Director General of Land Department collects honour for strategic and financial planning.” ([Zawya](#))

June 1: ‘No limits to what UAE women can achieve’: Sheikha Fatima gives wide-ranging interview on female empowerment

“Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak has used a rare interview to salute more than four decades of women’s empowerment and call for an even greater female role in the UAE’s progress.” ([The National](#))

Yemen

June 1: Yemeni women fight back against sexual harassment

“In light of Yemen’s conservative society where women are often removed from the public eye, some women have started to rebel and assert their power through education and employment.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

By Samaa Ahmed



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