

MENA Women's News Brief

November 4-17, 2014

November 11: What It's Like Being a Female Startup Founder in The Middle East

“A quiet revolution has begun to emerge in the Middle East beyond the headlines of conflict, one that might ultimately do more to change the face of the region. This chapter tells the amazing size and scale of women as leaders in the startup-ecosystem.” ([Business Insider](#))

November 17: Voices of strong Afghan women must not be extinguished

“The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has today, November 17, condemned the attack on Afghan woman MP Shukria Barakzai on November 16 and once again urged authorities in the country to do more to ensure the voices of women political leaders are not extinguished or intimidated. Although Barakzai, a high-profile women's rights activist and parliamentarian, survived the suicide bomb attack in Kabul, three people were killed and many more reportedly injured. Barakzai, also a member of IPU's Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, is the latest Afghan woman MP to be targeted in recent years.” ([Inter-Parliamentary Union Press Office](#))

Bahrain

November 9: Thirty-five women in fray

“Thirty-five women are contesting Bahrain's national elections this year, with 22 running for parliament and 13 standing for municipal councils. They account for just 8.1 percent of the total 432 candidates now in the fray for next month's polls, of whom 278 are seeking seats in parliament and 154 are targeting municipal councils.” ([Gulf Daily News](#))

November 16: Bahrain arrests 13 female activists demanding anti-regime vote

“Bahraini authorities have arrested 13 women in a crackdown on activists calling for an anti-regime referendum during the upcoming parliamentary election, activists said on Sunday, November 16.” ([Daily Star](#))

Egypt

November 16: Fighting Female Genital Mutilation (Op-Ed)

“Other than the tireless Egyptian activists who for years have fought to eradicate it, very few talk about a practice that brings nothing but harm to so many girls and women. In her books, the feminist Nawal El Saadawi has long documented her own cutting at the age of 6 and her tenacious campaign against a practice that is carried out by both Muslims and Christians in Egypt. But why aren't other prominent women speaking out by sharing their own experience of surviving genital cutting? The silence comes at a great cost.” ([New York Times](#))

Iran

November 5: Narges Mohammadi Summoned to Evin Prison Court on Unspecified Charges

Narges Mohammadi, the prominent human rights defender and Deputy Head of the now shuttered Defenders of Human Rights Center, has been summoned to the Evin Prison Court following a moving speech she made at the grave site of Sattar Beheshti, the 35-year-old blogger who died under torture at a police detention center in November 2012. “In the summons I received on November 5, 2014, it is stated

that I must turn myself in ‘for charges,’ but there is no further explanation about these charges,” said Mohammadi. ([International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran](#))

November 18: Iran files charges against Iranian-British woman

“Iran’s judiciary said authorities detained an Iranian-British woman because of her links to the opposition, not for attending a volleyball match, the semi-official ISNA news agency reported on Tuesday, November 18. The report quoted a statement by the Tehran prosecutor’s office as saying Ghoncheh Ghavami was active in opposition protests against the ruling establishment abroad, and was in contact with foreign satellite channels such as the BBC Farsi service — which is banned by the Iranian government because of its alleged role in fomenting tensions in the country.” ([Associated Press via the Washington Post](#))

Iraq

November 13: Yazidi families struggle to find and free enslaved daughters

“UN condemns ‘barbaric acts’ but hits roadblocks in releasing thousands of girls still held by ISIL fighters.” ([Al-Jazeera America](#))

November 14: Yazidi Girls Seized by ISIS Speak Out After Escape

“Five girls and women who recently escaped agreed to be interviewed at the end of October. Four of them were in Khanke, a predominantly Yazidi town in the far north of Iraq, and a fifth in the nearby city of Dohuk. Tens of thousands of Yazidi refugees have sought refuge in this region, in vast tent camps and in relatives’ homes, after fleeing their villages around the Sinjar mountains. The five victims consented to speak publicly only on the condition that their names not be revealed for fear that the Islamic State would punish their relatives.” ([New York Times](#))

November 15: Women in Iraq’s Anbar form group to fight ISIS

“‘Women of Justice,’ an all-female group aimed at fighting ISIS, was recently formed in the Sunni-stronghold province of Anbar.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

Israel

November 12: Druze women empowered through sports

“A new generation of Israeli Druze girls and women are increasingly participating in sports, exhibiting independence and advocating for gender equality in their traditional society.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

November 13: Employment rate among ultra-Orthodox women hits new high

“For the first time since the founding of the state, the rates of employment among ultra-Orthodox women are higher than those of all Israeli women, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced on Wednesday. Since 2000, employment of ultra-Orthodox women has shot up by nearly 30 percent, Ynet News reported. Almost 80 percent of Haredi women are employed, surpassing the overall female labor rate of 75.3 percent.” ([Times of Israel](#))

Kuwait

November 10: First time in over 50 years: Female prosecutors sworn in

“Twenty-two Kuwaiti women have been sworn in as public prosecutors in front of the head of the Supreme Judicial Council, Faisal Al-Marshad. They are the first female attorneys in more than 50 years, even though there was no legal or constitutional ban.” ([Pangea Today](#))

November 10: Kuwait opens shelter for 'runaway maids'

“The house, which has been in use for months, is set to formally open later this year. Another such shelter which opened in 2007, had room for only 50 women; the new one has 500 beds and currently houses around 150 women.” ([Al-Jazeera](#))

Saudi Arabia

November 4: 82 percent of women want to work from home

“Eighty-two percent of women prefer to work from home or remotely, according to a study conducted recently by the Khadijah bint Khuwaylid Center for Businesswomen at the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry.” ([Arab News](#))

November 6: Saudi women employees paid ‘almost half as men’

“According to statistics published by the World Economic Forum for 2014, Saudi women earn on average only 56 percent of the wages earned by men.” ([Saudi Gazette](#))

November 9: Shoura denies recommending women be allowed to drive

“The Shoura Council on Saturday said it has not made any recommendation to lift the ban on female drivers in the Kingdom, contrary to a foreign press report.” ([Arab News](#))

November 16: Factory run by female workers in Saudi Arabia breaks stereotypes

“A factory producing baby diapers and female hygiene pads operating in Riyadh is currently operating with a 75 percent capacity of a female labor force. The women are responsible for the offline production and manual packaging of these sanitary products. A third of the 65 women working have special needs and the assistance they require is provided such as an on-sight sign language translator.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

November 16: Saudi ministry says 10-week maternity leave in private sector

“The Saudi Labor Ministry has defended private sector employees’ right to maternity leave by saying any woman who works in the private sector should receive a maternity leave of four weeks prior to her due delivery date and six weeks following the delivery.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

Syria

November 9: Syrian Kurds give women equal rights, snubbing jihadists

“The local government in a majority Kurdish area of Syria has passed a decree granting women equal rights in what a monitoring group called ‘an affront’ to discriminatory jihadist moves.” ([Daily Star](#))

November 14: Syrian Women and Girls Face ‘Wall of Obstacles’

“Syrian women and girls are currently facing severe human rights abuses, violations, and humiliations, according to a report released by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) ‘Are We Listening? Acting on our Commitments to Women and Girls Affected by the Syrian Conflict.’” ([Daily Sabah](#))

Tunisia

November 11: This Tunisian woman supports equal rights for women by driving a cab — something she's done for 30 years

“If you get into a taxi in Tunisia’s capital, you just might find yourself in a cab driven by a woman. Out of Tunis’s 16,000 cabbies, 40 of them are women.” ([PRI](#))

November 16: Kalthoum Kannou, Tunisia’s first female presidential candidate

“A judge in the Court of Cassation, the highest court in the Tunisian judiciary system chiefly responsible for verifying the interpretation of the law, Kannou is Tunisia’s first woman to seek a post higher than that of a parliamentarian.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

UAE

November 10: Debate continues about women candidates and FNC

“The question of why only one woman was elected in the last Federal National Council race has again come up for debate.” ([The National](#))

November 10: Doing Business As A Female Entrepreneur In The United Arab Emirates

“Over the past few months, as well as during the event, I reached out to several female business owners in Dubai, both Arab women as well as expatriates doing business in the UAE, to learn more about their experiences as entrepreneurs in the region starting their businesses and what challenges they may have faced.” ([Forbes](#))

November 11: UAE has near perfect gender equality in education and health

“The UAE was found to have near perfect equality in ‘Educational Attainment’ and ‘Health and Survival’, two key categories which contribute to a country’s index in the Global Gender Gap Report 2014.” ([Zawya](#))

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