

MENA Women News Brief

August 11, 2015-August 25, 2015

Egypt

August 12: Egypt's prosecutors take aim at pop stars

“Rida al-Fouly, also called Salma, is known for her video clip ‘Sib Idi’ (‘Let Go of my Hand’). Suha Muhammad Ali, known as Egypt’s Shakira, has a famous video clip called ‘Al-Kamoun’ (‘Cumin’), and Dalia Kamal Youssef, whose stage name is Radis, is the dancer in ‘Ya Wad ya Tqil’ (‘You Cold-Hearted Man’). On June 2, lawyer Mohammed al-Nimr filed charges with the general prosecutor’s office against the three Egyptian dancers for incitement, immorality, and indecency, crimes punishable by three months to more than three years in prison.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

August 24: Anti-harassment campaign stirs controversy in Egypt

“A Facebook campaign called ‘Mat3brhash’ (‘Don’t Give Her Attention’) stirred controversy July 19, when it attacked Egypt’s women with harsh words such as ‘She’s not worth it, it’s not like she’s Angelina Jolie,’ angering women and men alike. Many women found this campaign insulting and worried it could lead to a rise in harassment, while men feared it could affect their efforts to fight harassment.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

Iran

August 2015: 50 Iranian Women You Should Know

The Iran Wire is profiling “50 Iranian Women You Should Know.” Entries are published every few days and include profiles on Shirin Ebadi and Fatemeh Karroubi most recently, among others. ([Iran Wire](#))

August 24: In Iran, a Women’s Soccer Revolution

“Women, and women’s sports, still face stiff winds of resistance in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hard-liners supported by the highest echelons of government oppose women even watching the country’s most popular sport, much less playing it in public. But quietly, there is something of a women’s soccer revolution going on here. And one of its leaders, of all people, is an Iranian-American.” ([Wall Street Journal](#))

Iraq

August 14: ISIS Enshrines a Theology of Rape

“The systematic rape of women and girls from the Yazidi religious minority has become deeply enmeshed in the organization and the radical theology of the Islamic State in the year since the group announced it was reviving slavery as an institution.” ([New York Times](#))

August 14: ISIS’s Brutality Toward Women and Girls—and How to Help the Victims (Op-ed by Haleh Esfandiari and Kendra Heideman)

“The world is well aware of ISIS’s brutality—yet the plight of Yazidi women has grown worse. Interviews with women who managed to escape ISIS slave camps and phone calls by women who were taken provide harrowing accounts of enslavement, abuse, and repeated rape; of human beings trafficked and sold to different people.” ([Wall Street Journal Think Tank Blog](#))

August 16: ISIS executes 15 women in Mosul

“Members of ISIS have executed more than a dozen women in Iraq’s embattled northern city of Mosul as they continue perpetrating crimes on a large scale in the areas under their control. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) spokesman in Mosul, Saeed Mamouzini, told Arabic-language al-Sumaria satellite television network that ISIS extremists killed 15 women on Saturday, August 15 after the victims refused to marry the militants.” ([Al Bawaba](#))

August 19: Escaped Yazidi sex slaves need mental health support-aid group

“A year after their capture by Islamic State militants, escaped sex slaves from the Yazidi minority are reaching northern Iraq, but get almost none of the psychological support they need after their ordeal of rape, torture and captivity, YAZDA, and aid group said.” ([Reuters](#))

Morocco

August 11: ‘We need privacy!’ Moroccan women demand ladies-only beach

“A group of women in Morocco launched a campaign calling for a beach reserved exclusively for women in the city of Tangier. On their Facebook page, the campaigners announced that they will officially demand from the authorities on August 30 a women-only section from the ‘large’ beach to swim ‘in conformity with Islamic legislations as Islam prohibit women to show parts of their body in public.’” ([Al Arabiya](#))

Oman

August 22: Three-month maternity leave for women demanded in Oman

“Maternity leave period in Oman should be of at least three months, says the women’s community in Oman, as the draft of new labour law has proposed increasing the leave to 60 days. At present, women working in the private sector are entitled to 50 days of maternity leave, while those in the government sector get 60.” ([Times of Oman](#))

Palestinian Territories

August 12: Hamas concludes first-ever military training camp for girls

“On Aug. 1, Hamas’ women’s wing opened the all-female ‘First al-Quds Army camp’ to prepare academically exceptional girls aged 12-18 for the liberation battle of Palestine. This camp, which ended Aug. 10, is the first of its kind in the Gaza Strip, as Hamas has never organized a female training camp before. Around 1,000 girls attend the camp, which offered a special curriculum to resist the occupation taught by women affiliated with the Hamas movement.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

August 20: Women in Gaza: ‘If we want to live here, we want to live in dignity’

“During the worst of the violence between Israel and Gaza last summer, Gaza student Hoda Elrayes shared her experiences of living on the frontline with GuardianWitness. One year on she tells us about three women in her community whose lives are still affected.” ([The Guardian](#))

Saudi Arabia

August 23: Saudi suffragettes: Women register to vote for the first time in Saudi Arabia

“For the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia, women can begin registering to vote this week. According to local media, women will be able to vote and run in elections held in December of this year, marking a step forward for proponents of women’s rights in a country that has received heavy criticism for its treatment of women.” ([CNN](#))

Syria

August 14: Kayla Mueller: US hostage 'refused chance to escape from ISIS to save Yazidi girls'

“Kayla Mueller, an American woman who died while being held hostage by ISIS, sacrificed her chance to escape her captors to save two Yazidi girls, it has been claimed. A fellow captive of Mueller has revealed to *The Independent* Mueller was kept as the private property of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi during her captivity in Al-Shadadiya, Syria. When the fellow captive and her sister managed to escape in October last year, she said Mueller refused to join them in the belief that her foreign appearance would put them in danger while on the run.” ([The Independent](#))

August 18: ISIS Lures 3 Teenage Girls: Reporter's Notebook

“A foreign correspondent based in London, Katrin Bennhold has written about everything from the migrant crisis in Calais and Scotland's independence movement to trigger-happy fox snipers. She has a front-page article in Tuesday, August 18's paper about three well-educated teenage girls who left their childhood home in Bethnal Green in East London for Syria, where they joined forces with ISIS. She talked with Times Insider about her reporting.” ([The New York Times](#))

August 20: The crucial role of women within Islamic State

“Islamic State, also known as ISIS, has a dual attitude to women. On the one hand it treats those it considers heretics as almost sub-human, as commodities to be traded and given away as rewards to jihadist fighters. But on the other hand, ISIS has big plans for Muslim women who migrate to their territory to play a key role in building the so-called caliphate.” ([BBC News](#))

Turkey

August 20: Have sexism, attacking women become part of Turkish right's political strategy?

“The pro-Justice and Development Party (AKP) daily *Turkiye* published on Aug. 13 a controversial column titled ‘Figen Yuksekdag and Women of Cancerous Souls.’ Figen Yuksekdag is the female co-chair of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). Targeting the image and reputation of Yuksekdag, the piece reinforces strong prejudices against left-wing women among the Turkish political right, particularly Islamists.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

August 23: Kurds Fighting the Islamic State Enraged at Turkey Over Brutal Killing of Female Fighter

“As photos of the naked and bloodied corpse of a female Kurdish militant recently trended on Twitter, women's rights groups in Turkey reeled at an act of sexualized torture committed by Turkish police, who also allegedly leaked the images. The pro-Kurdish group Save Kobane identified the body as Kevser Elturk, known by her nom de guerre Ekin Van. Elturk was a commander in the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK).” ([Vice News](#))

United Arab Emirates

August 11: UAE creates future female robotics entrepreneurs

“In line with its aim to become a knowledge-based economy, the Emirates is becoming home to a number of educational centers such as Fun Robotics, the first KHDA-approved children's robotics center in Dubai, as well as camps, workshops and local competitions that are focusing on teaching young women hardware and electronics.” ([WAMDA](#))

General


August 12: TechGirls: talented teens from North Africa and the Middle East visit the US

Twenty-seven tech-savvy teenage girls from the Middle East and North Africa are having the time of their lives in the U.S. right now, proving their math and science chops and setting an example for girls around the world. ([Christian Science Monitor](#))

By Julia Craig Romano and Sara Morell



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