

# **MENA Women News Brief**

**August 25, 2015-September 8, 2015**

## **Egypt**

### **September 1: Egypt appoints female judge as aide to justice minister**

“Egypt's Supreme Judicial Council has agreed to assign a female judge as an aide to the justice minister Ahmed El-Zend following a request from the minister himself. Ghada El-Shahawy will be the first woman in Egypt's history to serve as an aide to the justice minister. She will be responsible for women's and children's issues.” ([Ahran Online](#))

### **September 8: Interior Ministry to investigate video of policemen assaulting 2 women**

“The Ministry of Interior will launch an investigation into a video showing two women being assaulted by policemen in a shopping mall in Cairo, said the ministry's Assistant for Media and Public Relations General Abu Bakr Abdel Kareem, Monday, September 7.” ([Egypt Daily News](#))

## **Iran**

### **August 27: Cleric: “Slashing Wages For Bad Hejab is Against Sharia Law”**

“A prominent cleric has rejected proposals for women to face salary cuts as punishment for not observing strict rules regarding the Islamic headscarf. Cutting the salaries of women who wear ‘bad hejab’ is ‘problematic in terms of sharia law,’ well-respected religious expert Hojatoleslam Mohsen Gharavian said in a recent interview. He was responding to a proposal for a new scheme to ‘preserve hejab and chastity,’ which is due to be discussed in parliament soon.” ([Iran Wire](#))

### **August 28: Prominent Women's Rights Activist Held Illegally after Completion of Sentence**

“The student and women's rights activist Bahareh Hedayat, imprisoned for over five years in Iran, has been given an additional two-year prison sentence, days after receiving release orders from an Appeals Court in Tehran. The sentence, which dates from a 2007 suspended sentence, is in violation of Iran's own laws, since the statute of limitations on that charge expired in 2012.” ([International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran](#))

### **September 1: Iran, Turkey to cooperate on women, family affairs**

“Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, Shahindokht Molaverdi met with Mayor of Gaziantep and the former Turkish Minister of Women and Family Affairs, Fatma Sahin. During the meeting, vice president, stressing the relations between Iran and Turkey in particular the MoU between the two countries in regard to women and family, underlined the development of the mutual cooperation in this regard.” ([Mehr News](#))

### **September 2: Iran police to confiscate cars of 'poorly veiled' women**

“Women drivers in Iran's capital could have their cars impounded by police if they are caught driving with a poorly fixed veil or without their heads covered, the head of Tehran's traffic police, General Teymour Hosseini, said Wednesday, September 2”. ([Agence France-Presse via Yahoo News](#))

### **September 7: Iran's highly educated women face tougher job market**

“President Rouhani’s adviser for women and family affairs says more than 40 percent of women with higher education are unemployed. ILNA reports that on Sunday, September 6, Shahndokht Molaverdi gave a speech about women in the workforce, saying Iran’s top economic challenge is unemployment. She added that unemployment is particularly high among university-educated women and single mothers.” ([Radio Zamaneh](#))

## **Iraq**

### **September 8: Angelina Jolie: ISIS atrocities show need to tackle sexual violence in conflict**

“The atrocities and rapes perpetrated by Islamic State clearly demonstrate the need to tackle sexual violence in conflicts around the world, the actor and UN special envoy Angelina Jolie Pitt has warned. ‘The most important thing is to understand what it’s not: it’s not sexual, it’s a violent, brutal, terrorizing weapon and it is used unfortunately, everywhere,’” she told a British parliamentary committee on Tuesday, September 7.” ([The Guardian](#))

## **Israel**

### **August 27: Israeli minister pushes for improved gender equality**

“Since she was appointed minister of social equality just a few months ago, Gila Gamliel of the Likud Party has appeared before the Committee to Advance the Status of Women no less than three times. This rate is exceptional, considering her busy schedule, and is about more than just her involvement in the struggle for gender equality. It also has to do with the excellent relationship she has nurtured with that committee’s chair, Israeli-Arab Knesset member Aida Touma-Sliman of the Joint List.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **September 3: Hunger-striking women's group hopes to bring peace to Israel**

“A week after having concluded their hunger strike near the prime minister’s residence in Jerusalem, the activists of Women Wage Peace were invited for a meeting September 1 with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The female activists started their hunger strike on the occasion of the first anniversary of Operation Protective Edge (July-August 2014) and the movement’s establishment. They called on Netanyahu to promote a diplomatic arrangement to end the conflict. The hunger strike lasted for 50 days, similar to the duration of the operation in Gaza last summer.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

### **September 7: First female Israeli envoy to Arab country presents credentials in Amman**

“Israel’s new envoy to Jordan presented her credentials to King Abdullah in a ceremony in Amman Monday, September 7, becoming Israel’s first woman to serve as ambassador to an Arab country, the Foreign Ministry said. Israel announced Einat Shlein’s appointment last year, one of seven women who were nominated to 12 new diplomatic positions.” ([Times of Israel](#))

## **Kuwait**

### **August 27: Kuwaiti recruits women as parliament guards**

“In a historic breakthrough for women, Kuwait is recruiting female guards for the parliament in a bid to improve the security system. ‘Having women guards at the parliament has become an urgent necessity amid the security conditions and developments in the country,’ Major General Khalid Al Waqeeet, Assistant Secretary General for Parliament Security Guard Affairs, said.” ([Gulf News](#))

## **Morocco**

### **September 6: Moroccan teen arrested in Spain on Daesh recruitment charges**

“An 18-year-old woman from Morocco was arrested in Spain on Saturday, September 5 for allegedly being an Islamic State recruiter. Police in Gandia, a city near Valencia, arrested the woman as she was preparing to fly to Syria in order to join the extreme Islamic terror group, according to the report by AFP. Police said in a statement that the woman, ‘was making the last preparations for her journey’ at the time of her arrest.” ([Al-Bawaba](#))

## **Palestinian Territories**

### **September 8: Palestinian women up in arms against Israeli soldiers**

“One week after a confrontation between an Israeli soldier and a 12-year-old Palestinian boy captured international headlines, the boy's family is back protesting the occupation of their land. On August 31, 14-year-old Ahed Tamimi and her mother, Narimane, engaged in a fistfight with a heavily armed Israeli soldier in the village of Nabi Saleh, west of Ramallah. The fight occurred after the soldier shoved Ahed’s brother Mohammed, who had his hand in a cast, while trying to arrest him. The mother and daughter succeeded in saving him, in scenes that were broadcast by Arab and worldwide media.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

## **Qatar**

### **August 27: Qatar Airways relaxes female cabin crew pregnancy rules**

“Qatar Airways is relaxing rules that saw female cabin crew members who became pregnant face the sack. Under the new policies, female flight attendants who become pregnant are now offered temporary ground jobs. ‘This is really about making sure we attract and retain the best talent,’ said a spokesperson for the Doha-based airline.” ([BBC News](#))

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **August 29: Twitter campaign to stop first Saudi women's vote**

“Conservative voices have been waging an online campaign to oppose the first-ever opportunity Saudi women will have to vote in December. But they've been matched by social media users using sarcasm and wit to promote the cause of women. Women will for the first time be able to stand for office as well as vote in municipal polls.” ([BBC News](#))

### **August 31: Interactive: Saudi Arabia’s pioneering women**

View infographics about history-making Saudi Arabian women on Al Arabiya’s website [here](#).

### **September 2: Only 16 women so far registered for first-ever vote in Saudi Arabia**

“Since August 22, women in Saudi Arabia are allowed to register to vote for the municipal elections in December, the first time they are allowed to do so, as well as stand for office. Nevertheless, local reporting indicates that since that date, only 16 women have actually signed up to vote. However, Fawziya Al-Hani, an activist who is promoting voter registration among women says she expects the numbers will pick up once the women’s suffrage movement gains more visibility.” ([New York Times Women in the World](#))

### **September 2: Saudi Arabia to appoint women to serve female hajj pilgrims**

“Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj has formally requested the Ministry of Civil Services to facilitate the appointment of women employees at its branches so as to offer the best services to female pilgrims. This is the first time the ministry has taken the initiative to appoint women employees.” ([Al Arabiya](#))

### **September 3: Forty-six Saudi women have joined ISIS since 2011, MOI says**

“More than 40 Saudi women, some with their children, have joined the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) militant group since 2011, Maj. Gen. Mansour Al Turki, spokesman for the Saudi Ministry of Interior told Al Hayat newspaper.” ([Al Arabiya](#))

### **September 4: Path to progress proceeds at snail's pace for Saudi Arabian women (Op-ed by Suad Abu-Dayveh)**

“Saudi Arabia’s slow progress towards gender equality continued last week with the first two women in the country registering to vote in advance of December’s elections. According to Al Arabiya, one-third of Saudi polling stations will be dedicated to female voters.” ([The Guardian](#))

## **Syria**

### **September 8: Teenage girl accused of trying to join Kurdish forces in Syria on trial in London**

“Protesters picketed outside the London courthouse where Shilan Ozcelik, a teenage British girl of Kurdish descent, went on trial for trying to join Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State group (ISIS) in Syria.” ([Rudaw](#))

## **Tunisia**

### **September 2: Tunisia's lesbian community mobilises against deep-rooted prejudice**

“Tunisia’s attitude to its lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community goes beyond the social. Article 230 of Tunisia’s constitution forbids acts of sodomy, with those found guilty facing jail sentences of up to three years. Article 226 rules against outrages to public decency, a catch-all law often used to target the country’s trans community. Both laws date from 1914 and remain untouched by the 2011 revolution and the subsequent rush to reform.” ([The Guardian](#))

## **Turkey**

### **August 25: The three most innovative Turkish women of 2015**

“The Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s (MIT) Technology Review magazine has included three Turkish women in its ‘35 Innovators Under 35’ list this year. The list includes 35 inspiring inventors, entrepreneurs, visionaries, humanitarians and pioneers from around the world. Meet Duygu Kayaman, Gözde Durmuş and Canan Dağdeviren.” ([Hurriyet Daily News](#))

### **August 30: Turkey appoints first ever hijab-wearing female minister**

“The 52-year-old Ayse Gurcan has become Turkey’s first ever hijab-wearing female minister. She was appointed by Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu as one of the members of the interim Cabinet announced on Friday, August 30, and will serve as the minister of family and social policy.” ([Rudaw](#))

### **August 31: Women adamant about restoring peace in Turkey**

“But although Turkey is time traveling back to the war-torn Turkish-Kurdish conflict of the 1990s in the southeast, cries for peace in the country have never sounded louder. Activists, journalists, academics, civil society groups - not to mention the dozens of grieving parents - are demanding peace at once in Turkey. The simple slogan ‘Barış Hemen Şimdi’ (Peace Now) has never sounded more urgent.” ([Hurriyet Daily News](#))

## **United Arab Emirates**

### **September 1: 76 women to run in UAE's upcoming parliament polls**

“Next month’s parliamentary elections in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will feature 76 female candidates, according to the country’s official electoral commission.” ([Journal of the Turkish Weekly](#))

## General


### **August 26: Women-only carriages around the world: do they work?**

“Segregated areas on public transport are in use in several countries around the world - mostly those where women face institutional discrimination, severe sexual harassment, or both. The measures have met with mixed success, sometimes welcomed by women as a safe haven, sometimes resented as symptomatic of wider mistreatment, and in other places deemed irrelevant because they are often used by men who ignore the rules.” ([The Guardian](#))

By **Julia Craig Romano**



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