

MENA Women News Brief

May 24-June 7, 2017

Egypt

May 24: Empowering Egyptian women by turning homes into factories

“Talaat’s initiative, called el-Masryeen Awla (Egyptians First), started in 2006 in public parks where he taught women – with or without disabilities – to earn a living through handicrafts. Since 2014, the project has continued in training centers in Cairo and in Giza, which have 200 trainers and 400 trainees.” ([Al Monitor](#))

May 26: Who's fed up with sex assaults on Egyptian women? These guys

“Munir Tawab admits he added to Egypt’s reputation for catcalling and groping women on the street. But a new movement led by one man to combat sexual harassment – considered the norm in this country – has changed Tawab's actions.” ([USA Today](#))

June 1: SBWC receives Egyptian women entrepreneurs

“The Sharjah Business Women Council received graduates from ‘Ana Raeda,’ an initiative by Egypt’s Ministry of Trade and Industry’s Small and Medium Enterprise Development. The meeting is in line with the Council’s targets to break barriers and open up communication with entities relevant to empowering women professionally and economically, and aims to strengthen joint cooperation.” ([Gulf News](#))

June 1: Editors from Egypt, Kenya receive Women in News Award

“Two women from Egypt and Kenya have been awarded the first WAN-IFRA Women in News Editorial Leadership Award in MENA and North Africa, organizers announced Wednesday, May 31. The Women in News Editorial Leadership Award is part of WAN-IFRA’s Gender and Media Freedom Strategy.” ([The Daily Star](#))

Iran

May 24: Why women – and some men – in Iran are wearing white headscarves on Wednesdays

“Masih Alinejad, the woman behind the My Stealthy Freedom phenomenon, has launched a new campaign in her quest to reverse Iran’s compulsory hijab law. Using the hashtag #WhiteWednesdays on social media, women and men are posting videos of themselves wearing or carrying white headscarves, or some other white symbol, and sharing messages of empowerment in a show of solidarity with the theme of ‘without compulsion.’” ([New York Times](#))

May 25: Iran: Women Face Bias in the Workplace

“Laws and policies that discriminate against women interfere with Iranian women’s right to work, Human Rights Watch said in a report “‘It’s a Men’s Club’: Discrimination Against Women in Iran’s Job Market,’ released Thursday, May 25. Women confront an array of restrictions, such as on their ability to travel, prohibitions on entering certain jobs, and an absence of basic legal protections.” ([Human Rights Watch](#))

May 30: Rouhani May Appoint Three Female Ministers in New Cabinet

“Iran’s vice-president for women and family affairs, Shahindokht Molaverdi, maintains that now more than ever, the ground is prepared for the presence of women ministers in the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s new cabinet, which is supposed be formed by mid-August. ‘We predict that President

Rouhani would propose two to three woman ministers to the Parliament for his cabinet. We will do our best to this end.” ([Iran Front Page](#))

June 6: Iranian women in combat training

“Iranian women perform as they train Far East Fighting Arts to be able to defend themselves, at the Jughin castle which is located 40 km's far from Tehran.” ([Middle East Monitor](#))

Iraq

May 25: I ran an illegal beauty salon: The secret lives of women under Islamic State

“When IS arrived in Mosul, Anwar refused to stop hairdressing, despite it being strictly prohibited. Instead, she rebelled in her own quiet way, running a secret beauty salon at home for the women in the neighbourhood, buying cosmetics – which were also banned – on the black market.” ([Middle East Eye](#))

May 29: After losing many of its men, ISIS uses women to protect its last holdouts in Mosul

“After losing many of its men in the fight for Mosul, the Islamic State (ISIS) extremist group started to use women to defend its last holdouts in Iraq’s second largest city, military sources reported on Sunday, May 28. ([ARA News](#))

May 31: Zaha Hadid: The only woman who won the Royal Gold Medal

“Iraqi-born British architect Zaha Hadid, was the first female winner of the Pritzker Architecture Prize on May 31, 2004. She also received the UK's most prestigious architectural award, the Stirling Prize, and she became the first woman to be awarded the 2016 Royal Gold Medal in architecture by the Royal Institute of British Architects.” ([Al Jazeera](#))

June 1: Iraqi army imposes Ramadan ‘burqa ban’ in Mosul fearing Isis will use it for attacks

“Women have been told they are not allowed to wear traditional Islamic clothing such as the burka and niqab in newly liberated areas of Mosul as part of new security measures imposed for the month of Ramadan, Iraqi police have said. A statement from Nineveh police said that face coverings would temporarily be banned so Isis suicide bombers could not disguise themselves as women in public places.” ([Independent](#))

Israel/Palestinian Territories

May 29: United Nations pulls support for Palestinian women's centre named after terrorist

“The U.N. says it has stopped supporting a Palestinian community centre in the West Bank that was named for a woman who participated in a deadly 1978 attack in Israel. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’s office says the U.N. withdrew its support after learning the centre was named for Dalal Mughrabi.” ([Toronto Sun](#))

May 31: A Fish Out of Water: Gaza's First Fisherwoman

“Palestinian teenager Madeleine Kolab takes over her father's fishing business when he's injured in an Israeli attack. As the eldest of three children and with no other source of income, Madeleine felt obliged to become the sole family breadwinner after her father was badly injured in the gunboat attack - a challenge she now takes great pride in.” ([Al Jazeera](#))

June 5: In Gaza, Marriage Comes with a Host of Dangers for Women

“For women in Gaza, dire economic conditions combined with a dearth of legal protections can cause many marriage-related problems. Among them are early marriages, wedding-related debt and domestic abuse.” ([News Deeply](#))

Jordan

May 27: Exporters association holds workshop on women exporters

"The Jordan Exporters Association on Saturday, May 27 held a workshop on the opportunities and challenges facing women in small-and medium-sized enterprises who seek to export companies' products, with the support of USAID and the Centre for International Private Enterprise. The workshop focused on economic challenges facing exports in light of regional instability, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported." ([The Jordan Times](#))

May 27: Empowering families and communities in Jordan

"The Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) and Al Marji' Publications have recently signed a cooperation agreement, focusing on women's legal empowerment. 'We believe that it is possible to further achieve a vision of renaissance in the Arab world where values of dignity, equality, solidarity and pluralism will prevail,' said Samar Muharab ARDD Chief Executive Officer." ([The Jordan Times](#))

May 30: Making Soap Gives Refugee Women a Fresh Start in Jordan

"With the two countries in the midst of occupation and war, their soap-making tradition is near extinct. The fate of Aleppo's soap factories is unclear, and only two factories remain in Nablus. But in Jordan, home to many Syrians and Palestinians fleeing crisis, refugee women are reclaiming the art of soap making." ([News Deeply](#))

May 31: Debate continues as Article 308 on way to Lower House's vote

"Activists and former officials have speculated that recent recommendations made by a Royal committee to annul Article 308 of the Penal Code – which allows rapists to escape punishment if they marry their victims – will pass, despite some opposition in the Lower House of Parliament." ([The Jordan Times](#))

Kuwait

June 4: 60pc of Kuwaiti Employees are Women

"Despite the absence of women in top positions of most sectors, there are many female employees in the governmental institutions. According to statistics issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the number of Kuwaiti employees in the public sector as of April 1 reached 252,580. They constitute 74.52 percent of the total number of employees. Among them, male Kuwaiti employees constitute 29.93 percent and female employees 44.59 percent." ([The Arab Times](#))

Lebanon

May 25: Lebanon's female graphic designers draw battle lines

"'Critical Mass: Women in Graphic Design,' was held May 19-26 at Beirut Design Week (BDW) at KED, a refurbished factory built in the 1930s in Karantina. The exhibition also displayed the posters of three other Lebanese women graphic designers: Rana Zaher, Yasmine Darwiche and Stephy Ibrahim for Saturn In Motion." ([Al Monitor](#))

May 31: Lebanon bans Wonder Woman film over Israeli actress

"Lebanon's interior ministry has officially banned the new Wonder Woman film from cinemas because an Israeli actress, Gal Gadot plays the lead role, a ministry source and a security official said. Lebanon is officially at war with Israel and its Ministry of Economy and Trade oversees a boycott of any business transaction concerning Israel." ([Al Jazeera](#))

May 31: President's daughter takes leadership role on women's commission

"Claudine Aoun Roukoz, the daughter of President Michel Aoun, was officially announced Tuesday, May 30, as chair of the National Commission for Lebanese Women. Roukoz's appointment came as part of the new leadership of the NCLW General Assembly, which also saw Abir Chebaro Ibrahim and former Minister Wafaa Dikah Hamzeh appointed vice presidents." ([The Daily Star](#))

June 6: Women's quota on the agenda, but for later

"With talk of an electoral law agreement in the making, the issue of a women's quota is back in the limelight as several lawmakers rallied behind a demand for a set minimum for women's representation. After several delays, a new proportional vote law reached by the country's leadership last week is under discussion, and rival factions are reportedly working to sort out last minute details." ([The Daily Star](#))

Morocco

May 24: The "Anazur Caravane" Uncovers the Difficult Reality of Moroccan Nomad Women

"In the often forgotten desert dunes of Southeast Morocco, the 'Anazur Caravane,' a convoy, initiated by 'Young Women for Democracy,' recently relayed to the press the poignant testimonies of the women of the Tinghir nomad tribes. The Anaruz Caravane said in a statement that the aim of their convoy was to highlight the life of nomadic tribes, their hardships as citizens who should fundamentally enjoy of their basic rights." ([Morocco World News](#))

June 4: Moroccan Police Stifle Women's Protest in Northern City

"Police encircled hundreds of female protesters to leave a public park in Al-Hoceima late on Saturday June 3, impeding others from joining, as the women chanted 'freedom, dignity and social justice', a Reuters reporter at the scene said. 'We go to sleep in fear, and we wake up in fear,' said Fatima Alghloubzari, 54 who tried to join the protest on Saturday, June 3. 'We never imagined our city would become like this.' One woman fainted after police stifled the protest." ([The Peninsula Qatar](#))

Saudi Arabia

May 24: Why Saudi Women Are Literally Living 'The Handmaid's Tale' (Op-Ed)

"Just over a week after Dina Ali Lasloom, a 24-year-old Saudi Arabian, was dragged onto a plane from Manila to Riyadh with her mouth taped shut and her arms and legs bound, the United Nations voted to appoint Saudi Arabia to a four-year term on its Commission on the Status of Women. So much for the status of this Saudi woman." ([New York Times](#))

June 1: Saudi prince supports women driving

"A Saudi former minister, Prince Faisal Bin Abdullah said that allowing women to drive was bound to happen and that women would be driving society, not just cars. 'The ban on women driving has been imposed on us, and women in the past used to lead their own camels. Women need to be empowered because they represent more than half of the society and they are highly dependable,' Prince Faisal Bin Abdullah said." ([Gulf News](#))

June 6: Loujain al-Hathloul: Saudi women's driving activist arrested

"A Saudi rights activist, Loujain al-Hathloul, who was detained for 73 days for flouting the country's ban on female drivers has been arrested again. Loujain al-Hathloul was picked up at King Fahd International Airport in Dammam on 4 June, the human rights group Amnesty International says. It says Ms Hathloul has been denied access to a lawyer or her family." ([BBC](#))

Syria

May 29: Syrian pop-up dinners help refugee women and share delicious food

"A group of Syrian refugee women living in Vancouver has found meaningful work in Canada thanks to their country's cuisine. They work for Tayybeh: A Celebration of Syrian Cuisine, offering catering services and a pop-up dinner every month or so." ([CBC News](#))

June 1: Syrian women in Egypt work to build strength out of hardship

"Six years into the devastating war, Syrian women who sought refuge in Egypt have become stronger and acquired new survival skills. Positive changes may stem from cruel experiences, and indisputably wars represent one of the hardest experiences." ([Al Monitor](#))

June 2: Meet the Kurdish woman leading battle against IS in northern Syria

"A large number of the fighters in the Kurdish factions have been female, and they have gained considerable experience in leading battles against the Islamic State (IS). Rojda Felat, one of the top commanders of the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) who fought groups like Jabhat al-Nusra at Ras al-Ain in 2012 and IS in Kobani, is now one of the leaders of a major campaign against IS." ([Al Monitor](#))

June 6: A portrait of a refugee woman: a conversation with Meryem

"Her name is Meryem. She is a 38-year-old Syrian woman, with a striking beauty and fearless eyes that bore into my own. Meryem has two sons, one aged 18 and the other just 16. As part of my work for a humanitarian aid organization, I am here to record the story of her younger son. But now I have no intention of leaving without reaching out to Meryem too." ([Independent Turkey](#))

Tunisia

June 2: French Open: Who is Ons Jabeur, The Woman Making History in Tennis?

"On Wednesday, May 31, at the Court Suzanne Lenglen, Roland Garros, Ons Jabeur made history. After beating world No. 6 Dominika Cibulkova 6-4, 6-3 at the French Open on Wednesday, Jabeur held the Tunisian flag aloft in celebration: She had become not only the first woman from Tunisia to make it to the third round of a Grand Slam tournament, but also the first Arab woman." ([Newsweek](#))

Turkey

May 30: Koç for gender equality and inventions

"Koç Holding was the only company from Turkey on the Fortune Global 500 list when it entered the list in 419th place in 2016. As a signatory of the He For She campaign, Koç Holding has been holding seminars since 2015 within the framework of 'I support gender equality.' They have reached 81,000 people so far. 'Gender equality' is one of Turkey's most important issues. Turkey was 130th out of 144 countries in the most recent Global Gender Gap report from the World Economic Forum." ([Hurriyet Daily News](#))

May 30: Kurdish Activist Arrested for Social Media Posts on Armenian Genocide

"Mukaddes Alataş, a Kurdish human rights activist from Diyarbakir, was recently arrested for 'being a member of a terror organization... The reason for her detention is her activities regarding human rights, women's rights, and her social media posts about the Armenian Genocide,' said Eren Keskin, a leading human rights lawyer and co-head of the Human Rights Association (IHD)." ([The Armenian Weekly](#))

June 5: 173 women killed in Turkey in first five months of 2017: Report

“Some 173 women were killed by men in the first five months of 2017, according to a report released by a women’s rights activist organization on Monday, June 5. The report from women’s rights organization ‘We Will Stop Femicide’ stated that 39 women were killed in May, more than any other month.” ([Hurriyet Daily News](#))

United Arab Emirates

May 31: Six men get life for sexually exploiting two women

“Six men have each received life sentences for forcing two women into prostitution, one of whom lost her life trying to escape. The six Bangladeshi men, aged between 25 and 44, bought and sold the two Indonesian women between themselves in November 2015. They locked the women in the rooftop room of a building in Dubai.” ([Gulf News](#))

Yemen

May 27: Girls are increasingly being married off in war-torn Yemen

“Child marriages are mounting dramatically in the Arab world’s poorest country, fueled by a war that has thrown society into turmoil. As the fighting grinds on in its third year, millions of families are unable to make ends meet, and more than 3 million people have been driven from their homes, ending up in camps. For families desperate for cash, unable to support their children or afraid they cannot protect their daughter’s ‘virtue,’ marrying off a girl becomes the solution.” ([Arab News](#))

May 30: Women in Yemen Bear Brunt of Suffering, Civil Society Leader Tells Security Council, as Special Envoy Recounts Assassination Attempt

“Only an end to war would reverse the suffering endured by the people of Yemen, a civil society representative from that country, Radhya Almutawakel told the Security Council Tuesday, May 30, emphasizing the conflict was taking the greatest toll on women. Almutawakel emphasized the need for a long-term commitment to promoting peace in the face of hostile extremist groups, impending famine and the outbreak of previously eradicated cholera.” ([Relief Web](#))

June 6: Marib Yemen Women Union promotes anti-cholera awareness drive

“The Yemen Women Union, Marib’s branch, launched Tuesday, June 6 an anti-cholera awareness campaign amongst women. Themed ‘Your Health Concerns Us’, the Ramadan-long campaign educates women on how cholera spreads, how to prevent infections and how to react when someone catches the strain.” ([Saba Net](#))

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