

# **MENA Women's News Brief**

**September 23-October 6, 2014**

## **September 24: What world gets wrong about Arab women (Zainab Salbi)**

“Today, as the world grapples with this challenging and tumultuous moment in the region, it is important to pay close attention to the voices of Arab women. But rather than confining the story of women to an issue of religion or culture, it is important that the world uses what is happening to them as a barometer of the trajectory that individual societies are on. After all, how a country or a region treats its women in many ways tells the story of the future political direction of that country.” ([CNN](#))

## **September 30: 16 Women Entrepreneurs Who Are Changing the Way Business Is Done In The Arab World**

“Authors Nafeesa Syeed and Rahilla Zafar roamed the Middle East and North Africa in search of something common but often overlooked: Successful female entrepreneurs. In their 2014 book, *Arab Women Rising*, Syeed and Zafar profile just 35 of the hundreds of innovative women they interviewed. Coming from diverse background and fields, the women shared how they’ve made it in volatile business environments.” ([Buzzfeed](#))

## **October 6: Olympic official says hijab must be accepted**

“Asian Olympic chief Ahmad Al-Sabah speaks out amid uproar over Islamic head covering ban at Asian Games basketball tournament.” ([Times of Israel](#))

## **Bahrain**

### **September 27: Bahrain women looking for more poll successes**

“With parliamentary and municipal elections now clearly in sight, speculation in Bahrain is rife about the number of women who will be ready to confront challenges and present candidacies.” ([Gulf News](#))

### **September 29: Shura Second Deputy Chairman calls for legislative support for women**

“Shura Council Second Deputy Chairman, Dr. Bahiya Mohammad Al-Jishi, stressed the need to support the advancement of Arab women by legislative and executive branches, and to develop an Arab agreement on the protection of women's rights.” ([Bahrain News Agency](#))

### **October 1: Bahrain court lifts travel ban on Maryam al-Khawaja**

“A Bahrain court lifted a travel ban on a prominent activist, Maryam al-Khawaja on Wednesday, October 1, who is charged with assaulting airport police as she flew in to try to visit her jailed father, a judicial source said. She was arrested on arrival at the airport on August 30 and charged with assaulting two policewomen.” ([Middle East Online](#))

## **Egypt**

### **October 2: National Women's Council Launches Hotline for Harassment Complaints**

“Egypt's National Council for Women (NCW) announced dedicating an operations room for receiving harassment reports from women during Eid al-Adha holiday.” ([All Africa](#))

**October 5: Less sexual harassment over Eid doesn't mean problem is decreasing: Initiative**

“Anti-sexual harassment initiative attributes lower figures for assault to beefed-up security presence across city.” ([Al-Ahram](#))

**Iran**

**September 22: UK urges Iran to release ‘female volleyball prisoner’**

“Britain has urged Iran to release a British-Iranian woman who has been imprisoned in Tehran for nearly three months after attending a men’s volleyball match.” ([The Telegraph](#))

**September 28: Iranian Women Unemployment Rate at 43.4 Percent**

“Women's unemployment rate in the last eight years reached 43.4 percent, according to the latest report released by the Statistical Center of Iran.” ([Payvand](#))

**October 6: Jailed British-Iranian woman starts hunger strike**

“A British-Iranian woman imprisoned in Tehran after trying to attend a men's volleyball match has gone on hunger strike to mark her 100 days in custody, her mother said.” ([Daily Star](#))

**Iraq**

**September 24: Iraq conflict: ISIS 'trafficking Yazidi women for sex'**

“More than 3,000 Yazidi women and children have been captured by Islamic State militants and are being trafficked for sex.” ([BBC News](#))

**September 25: Women’s Rights Activist Executed by ISIS in Iraq**

“Sameera Salih Ali al-Nuaimy, an Iraqi lawyer known for her work promoting women’s rights has been killed by Islamic State fighters, the head of the United Nations human rights office said, continuing a pattern of attacks on professional women.” ([New York Times](#))

**September 27: From Pen and Phone to Bombs and Drones**

“‘It is the obligation and duty of Arab countries, where men always feel so possessive about their mother, their wife, their daughter, to condemn ISIS’s violence against women,’ said Haleh Esfandiari, the director of the Middle East Program at the Wilson Center. ‘Why don’t they say a word? I’ve been working with women in the Middle East for 40 years, and I’ve never seen such brutality, such barbarism as that which ISIS is committing against women. It is unbelievable.’” ([New York Times](#))

**October 2: Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq**

“The ongoing armed conflict in Iraq continued to take a heavy toll on civilians. The number of civilians who have died from the secondary effects of violence... are unknown. Children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, and elderly people are particularly vulnerable.” ([United Nations](#))

**October 3: First Responders: Women's Organizations Fighting Against Gender-Based Violence in Iraq**

“The international community must coordinate their efforts with local women's organizations to more proactively put the needs, protection and rights of women and girls in Iraq on their radar for immediate action.” ([Huffington Post](#))

## **Israel**

### **September 22: Israeli Arab women: Stuck in economic purgatory, without a paddle**

“Arab Israeli women have been hampered by a society that has accorded Arabs and women, much less Arab women, second-class status.” ([Fortune](#))

### **September 23: Women’s sections in shul: separate, unequal**

“A new photographic exhibition of Israeli synagogues can be an opportunity to examine the architecture of segregation.” ([Haaretz](#))

### **September 30: Israeli airline urged to stop ‘bullying’ of women by ultra-orthodox passengers**

“Petition organizer says airline should find way to accommodate religious requirements without breaching other people’s rights.” ([The Guardian](#))

## **Jordan**

### **October 3: Jordan's Brotherhood appoints 1st spokeswoman**

“The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood’s Islamic Action Front Party on Thursday appointed a woman as its media spokesperson for the first time since its establishment in 1992.” ([World Bulletin](#))

## **Kuwait**

### **September 26: Arab Parliament to formulate Arab draft document on women's rights**

“The Committee of Experts in charge of preparing the draft document for Arab women's rights convenes in Kuwait a meeting on Saturday, September 27. The committee of the Arab document experts for women's rights is made up of seven senior Arab experts in the field of legal and legislative drafting and the rights of women from Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Jordan and the Arab League.” ([Kuwait News Agency](#))

## **Lebanon**

### **October 1: Social Affairs Ministry launches protection program for Lebanese women and children**

“A new 'National Plan to Safeguard Children and Women in Lebanon,' was launched, following a memorandum of understanding between Social Affairs Minister Rashid Derbas and UNICEF Representative in Lebanon Ms. Annamaria Laurini.” ([Daily Star](#))

### **October 1: Lebanese women conquer abroad, suffer at home**

“Successful Lebanese women abroad are making international headlines, but Lebanese women at home continue to face legal and social discrimination, impeding them from similar success.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

## **Morocco**

### **September 29: Morocco: Moroccan Opposition Women Confront Discrimination**

“Opposition activists with Morocco's Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) gathered in Casablanca recently to focus on women's rights.” ([All Africa](#))

## **Oman**

### **September 29: Oman rejects hijab ban at Asian Games**

“Oman has urged all Islamic countries to join hands and call on international authorities to revise the rules that ban Muslim players from wearing the hijab in global competitions.” ([Times of Oman](#))

## **Qatar**

### **September 25: Qatar out of women's basketball over hijab row**

“Qatar pulled out of the women's basketball competition at the Asian Games after refusing to abide by international regulations preventing them from wearing hijabs, while organizers said they were powerless to do anything about it.” ([Reuters](#))

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **September 27: Education ministry gives boost to Saudi women**

“The [Saudi education] ministry last week reportedly reached an agreement with representatives from the Saudi board of chambers to grant professional permits to women, who will be allowed to work from home, working on the design of education programmes.” ([Gulf News](#))

## **Syria**

### **September 18: Sexual and Ethnic Violence and the Construction of the Islamic State**

“Rather than the hallmarks of savagery and barbarity, as senior U.N. officials described the assault on the Yezidis, Shi'is, Christians, and other groups deemed heretical or apostate, the repertoires of sexual and ethnic violence are better seen as part of ISIS's strategy to enact a particular vision of an Islamic state.” ([Political Violence At A Glance](#))

### **September 26: Are We Listening to Syria's Women and Girls?**

“Despite legislation meant to help women and girls in conflict zones, much more must be done to ensure rapid action on the ground—especially in Syria.” ([The Daily Beast](#))

### **October 1: ISIS behead captured Kurds in Syria**

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Wednesday that ISIS militants beheaded nine Kurdish fighters, including three women, captured during fighting over the northern Syrian town of Kobani, also known as Ayn Arab. ([Lebanon Daily Star](#))

## **Tunisia**

### **September 29: 47 Percent of Candidates in Legislative Elections Are Women, 12 Percent Among Them Are Heads of List**

“Secretary of State for Women and Family Affairs Neila Chaabane said women's participation in political life is still modest and should be strengthened to ensure full gender equality, particularly, regarding access to decision-making positions.” ([All Africa](#))

### **October 1: Tunisian women take a 'step backwards'**

“At a time when many women in the Arab world are fighting hard to promote their political rights, Tunisian women have them explicitly entrenched in their laws.” ([BBC News](#))

### **October 2: Essebsi: 'What Can I Say, She is a Woman' Comment Draws Anger**

“Nidaa Tounes President Beji Caid Essebsi angered many internet users after he refused to reply to statement by NCA [National Constituent Assembly] deputy speaker Mehrzia Labidi, saying, “What can I say? She is a woman.” ([Tunisia Live](#))

## **UAE**

### **September 22: Huge number of Abu Dhabi Film Festival competition entries directed by women**

“Thirty-seven of the 53 films to be screened at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival’s competition next month have been directed by women, including Emiratis.” ([The National](#))

**September 28: Mariam al-Mansouri on becoming UAE's first female fighter pilot - video**

“Major Mariam al-Mansouri, the UAE's first female fighter pilot, says it is a dream to serve her country in the air force. Al-Mansouri is among the coalition forces taking part in US-led airstrikes against Islamic State (Isis) militant targets in Iraq. She says men and women should be free to work in whatever field they choose.” ([The Guardian](#))

**September 30: Women and war: Fighting misconceptions of sex**

“Fighter pilot Major Mariam Al Mansouri, who led airstrikes against ISIL militants in Syria, is a role model for the new generation of Emirati women who are advancing in all walks of life.” ([The National](#))

**October 3: Shaikha Fatima named personality of the year by Forbes Middle East**

“Forbes Middle East made the announcement at a ceremony held to honor the most prominent women who contributed to the development of their countries.” ([Khaleej Times](#))

**October 5: Family taxis in Abu Dhabi available to women and couples, too**

“Elsa Fortuna, a driver of a family taxi operated by Emirates Taxi, said there is a need to let Abu Dhabi residents know family taxis are available.” ([The National](#))

**Yemen**

**October 2: YSP's Top Choice for Prime Minister**

“The Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) nominated Amat Al-Alim Alsoswa, a Yemeni woman politician and diplomat, for the position of prime minister.” ([Yemen Times](#))



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