

# MENA WOMEN QUARTERLY REPORT

The MENA Women Quarterly Report covers women's advances and setbacks in politics, economics, conflict situations, and human rights issues throughout the MENA region. This issue includes a special feature on women's attire.

October–  
December

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**Feature: Women's Attire**

Although controversy over women's clothing in the Middle East is not a new topic, it was a focal point of many news articles throughout the past quarter. During the past few months, some governments in the region have jailed women because of infractions against legally mandated attire. In December, Saudi police officers detained a woman after she removed her abaya iaycn th



discussed in parliament—recently approved the marriage between a pregnant 13-year-old and her 20-year old relative; with this move, the man is able to avoid a possible sentence of six years in prison. In the past few months, the Egyptian parliament has considered controversial bills related to child custody and adultery. And in Jordan, activists continue to demand reforms to the country’s penal code because of honor killings, which increased significantly in 2016.

Along with some of these constructive legal developments, there were other positive stories for women in the region. To help address the issue of honor killings in Jordan, the government plans to build a shelter for women “whose lives are in danger for reasons related to ‘family honour.’” Saudi Arabia recently held a two-week campaign that encourages victims of domestic violence to report abuse to a 24/7 hotline run by the Ministry of Social Affairs. An Egyptian documentary about sexual violence received an award at the San Francisco Arab Film Festival 2016, and Egyptian women who experience sexual harassment are reporting incidents to police more frequently according to local NGOs.

### **Women in Public Service**

The outcomes of several elections in the Middle East during the last quarter had mixed results for women’s representation. October’s parliamentary elections in Morocco caused women’s representation in the legislature to increase from 17 to 21 percent. Moreover, Moroccans elected 10 more women to the parliament than dictated by the quota of 71 women parliamentarians. In Kuwait however, only 1 of the 15 women who ran for a seat in the country’s 50-person legislature received enough votes to become a parliamentarian. In late December, Omanis voted

## **Women in Conflict Situations**

In the past few months, there were relatively few stories about women in conflict situations—some about women being held by ISIS, some about the situation for women in Syria, and one about how the ongoing conflict in Yemen has affected women. In October, dozens of Yazidi women who had been taken by ISIS in 2014 were transferred from Mosul, Iraq to Raqqa, Syria because of Iraqi-led efforts to recapture Mosul from ISIS. Another article detailed one family's search for their "Lost Girl," a three-year-old who was taken by ISIS two years ago. In Syria, a seven-year-old girl,

## Middle East Program Women's Publications

### MENA Women Quarterly Reports

- [\*f\* MENA Women Quarterly Report \(July-September 2016\)](#)
- [\*f\* MENA Women Quarterly Report \(April-June 2016\)](#)
- [\*f\* MENA Women Quarterly Report \(January-April 2016\)](#)
- [\*f\* MENA Women Quarterly Report \(October-December 2015\)](#)
- [\*f\* MENA Women Quarterly Report \(July-September 2015\)](#)
- [\*f\* MENA Women Quarterly Report \(April-June 2015\)](#)
- [\*f\* MENA Women Quarterly Report \(January-March 2015\)](#)

### Occasional Paper Series

- [\*f\* MENA Women in the Reformist Process: A Retrospective \(Spring 2014\)](#)
- [\*f\* Can International Human Rights Norms Secure Women's Rights in the MENA Region? \(Fall 2013\)](#)
- [\*f\* Women after the Arab Awakening \(Winter 2012\)](#)
- [\*f\* Is the Arab Awakening Marginalizing Women? \(Summer 2012\)](#)
- [\*f\* Islamic Feminism and Beyond: The New Frontier \(Fall 2010\)](#)
- [\*f\* Vanguard: Women in the Iranian Election Campaign and Protest \(Fall 2009\)](#)
- [\*f\* Reformist Women Thinkers in the Islamic World \(Spring 2009\)](#)
- [\*f\* The Status of Women in the Middle East \(Winter 2005\)](#)

### Viewpoint Series

- [\*f\* Saudi Women Go to the Polls Finally \(December 2015\)](#)
- [\*f\* Why is the Idea of Female Western Jihadists a Mystery? \(December 2015\)](#)
- [\*f\* Egypt's Fight Against FGM: Is There Hope After All? \(January 2015\)](#)
- [\*f\* The Coming Tunisian Elections: What Will be the Role of Women? \(October 2014\)](#)
- [\*f\* Barbarians: ISIS's Mortal Threat to Women \(August 2014\)](#)
- [\*f\* Women's Rights Under Egypt's Constitutional Disarray \(January 2013\)](#)
- [\*f\* Reflections on the Adoption of UNGA Resolution Banning Female Genital Mutilation \(January 2013\)](#)
- [\*f\* Voting as a Powerful Tool for Women \(October 2012\)](#)
- [\*f\* Fostering the Next Generation \(April 2012\)](#)

### International Women's Day Publications

- [\*f\* Five Years after the Arab Spring: What's Next for Women in the MENA Region? \(March 2016\)](#)
- [\*f\* Expansion or Contraction? Women's Rights in the MENA Region in 2015 \(March 2015\)](#)
- [\*f\* MENA Women: Opportunities and Obstacles 2014 \(March 2014\)](#)
- [\*f\* Challenges to Women's Security in the MENA Region \(March 2013\)](#)
- [\*f\* Reflections on Women in the Arab Spring: Women's Voices from Around the World \(March 2012\)](#)

Read the Middle East Program's [bi-weekly MENA Women's News Brief](#) for the latest news about women in the region.

Edited by Jack Durkee and Duma Kabli