

MENA Women's News Brief

April 22-May 5, 2014

Bahrain

May 4: Female pilots' group aiming high

“A female-only pilots' group hopes to welcome its 50th member this year as it grows in strength in the region. Established 21 years ago in Saudi Arabia, the Arabian section of the 99's International Women's Pilot Organization currently has 47 members, including 11 based in Bahrain... The 99s provides a valuable support network for female pilots and aspiring female pilots, many of whom have had to fight adversity to achieve their dream of flying planes for a living.” ([Gulf Daily News](#))

Egypt

April 22: Egyptian doctor to face nation's first trial over FGM

“A doctor in Egypt is set to stand trial on Thursday in relation to the female genital mutilation (FGM) of a child who died of complications. It is the first attempt to prosecute over a procedure banned in Egypt since 2008.” ([Al-Jazeera](#))

May 4: Parties and civil society organizations decry marginalization of women in country's transition

“Four political parties and seven civil society organizations strongly criticized the passage of laws dealing with upcoming parliamentary elections without consultation with women's groups and organizations.” ([Daily News Egypt](#))

Iran

April 22: Iran plans to eliminate free birth control

“Dr. Shahla Mir Galoy Bayat, a member of Iran's parliamentary health committee, has announced plans to eliminate Iran's successful family-planning programs.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

April 22: Iran's Unemployment Statistics for 2013: Women's Unemployment Rate Rises Further

“The latest figures published by the Iran Statistical Center indicate that the average rate of unemployment in 2013 for women had risen to be twice as high as those for men. This increase in the ratio between men and women took place while the overall rate of unemployment in the country fell by 1.7 percent in the same year. Furthermore, the employment rate for men grew by 1.8 percent that year while that for women dropped by 1.3 percent.” ([Payvand](#))

April 23: Iran Seeks To Offset Advancement of Women in Medicine

“Under a new plan being discussed by Iranian authorities, however, women's advancements in the field of medicine could be flatlined. Health Ministry officials have indicated that measures would be taken ‘to balance’ the percentage of male doctors by introducing gender quotas at medical schools. Last month, Health Minister Hassan Hashemi said Iran was considering ways to curtail the number of female medical students.” ([Payvand](#))

May 4: Women realtors may lose jobs in Iran

“A new edict may ban women from selling real estate in Iran... This new restriction has not yet been enforced. [Hesam] Oghabai [chairman of the Realtors Syndicate of Tehran Metropolitan Area] added that Amaken, the body responsible for enforcing religion-driven restrictions in commercial venues, had previously requested such a restriction. Some women are hopeful that the ban will not be enforced, some are confident about finding a job in another line of work but others are very anxious and fear the worst for their careers and lives.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

Iraq

April 22: Women prominent in coming Iraqi elections

“The coming Iraqi parliamentary election cycle, scheduled for April 30, is marked by an intensive presence of female candidates on the different lists of Iraqi political blocs, with women representing 2,607 out of 9,032 total candidates.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

April 27: Women Call for More Active Females in Iraqi Parliament

“Iraq needs a High National Council for Women’s Affairs, and that is what Shirouk Alabayachi wants to achieve if she is elected. Alabayachi, 56, is a candidate for the Civil Democratic Alliance that is offering an alternative to parties based on religion or sect. Since her return from Europe in 2003, she has worked for civil organizations in Baghdad.” ([Rudaw](#))

April 28: (Op-Ed) In Iraq, female candidates still held back by old paradigms

“A female Iraqi parliament candidate decided to publish her campaign photos across the country. However in Muslim areas, she published her photos wearing a hijab while in Christian areas, she published them without a hijab.” ([Al-Arabiya](#))

Israel

April 24: Arab-Israeli women break ground on pro soccer team

“When the Israeli women’s soccer team Hapoel Petah Tikva lost a number of its players to Israel’s national team ahead of World Cup qualifiers, founder Rafi Subra made a decision that sets the team apart from many of its rivals — he recruited from the Arab villages of northern Israel.” ([Salon](#))

May 3: Female Knesset members tour US

“Four female members of the Knesset are touring the United States to study the role of women in legislatures.” ([Times of Israel](#))

Jordan

May 4: In Jordan, Educated Women Face Shortage of Jobs

“Between 1980 and 2002, adult literacy rates for Jordanian women rose from 55 percent to 86 percent, according to the World Bank. Jordan is now one of eight countries in the Middle East and North Africa where more women than men go to university... Unemployment levels among highly educated women are above 35 percent, the World Bank said in a report published last year.” ([New York Times](#))

Kuwait

April 29: Kuwait court opens up judicial jobs to women

“A Court of First Instance in Kuwait has annulled a decision by the Ministry of Justice barring women from applying for the position of legal researcher, a stepping stone to the post of prosecutor. The verdict is seen as a new victory for women in the country in the fight for more rights.” ([Gulf News](#))

May 4: Kuwaiti lawmaker calls for ban on swimsuits

“The proposal aims to prevent nudity in swimming pools and in hotels of all categories,’ MP Hamdan Al Azmi said. ‘We want to protect the community from such negative phenomena. We also want to have strict rules and regulations that prevent mixing between sexes in swimming pools and to avoid acts contrary to public morals.’” ([Gulf News](#))

Lebanon

April 23: Meet Nadine Moussa, Lebanon's first female candidate for the presidency

“Nadine Moussa, Lebanon’s first female candidate for the presidency, insists that Lebanon needs a ‘new social contract,’ with women holding half of all parliamentary and governmental posts.” ([Daily Star](#))

May 5: Race highlights spectrum of women’s causes

“I am here for all women who are suffering from inequality,’ said Noura Hallaq, a lawyer who ran with a group from the Beirut Bar Association. ‘In Lebanon there are still many laws which are unfair to women, like the fact that Lebanese women can’t pass their nationality to their children, or unequal pay between men and women. It is for these fundamental rights that I ran today,’ she said, her face still flushed from completing the race.” ([Daily Star](#))

Morocco

April 27: Morocco reviews violence against women bill

“Moroccan authorities are reviewing a long-awaited law to combat violence against women. The bill takes unprecedented measures against perpetrators of gender violence.” ([eNCA](#))

Qatar

May 1: Educated and ambitious, Qatari women nudge their way into the office

“Qatari women outnumber men 2 to 1 at university, but a lack of work opportunities used to mean that a college degree was the end game. That's changing.” ([Christian Science Monitor](#))

Saudi Arabia

April 22: Saudi receives International Women of Courage Award

“Maha al-Muneef, a Saudi physician who received the US Secretary of State’s International Women of Courage Award for her efforts to combat domestic violence, talks to Al-Hayat about core issues affecting Saudi society.” ([Al-Monitor](#))

April 30: Firms offer incentives to retain female workers

“Several companies are now offering Saudi women employees incentives to stem an alarming rate of attrition, especially in retail stores.” ([Arab News](#))

May 1: First Saudi woman appointed to a top OIC post

“Maha Akeel, a Saudi journalist who was the managing editor of OIC journal, has been appointed the Director of Information and Public Relations at the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC).”

([Zawya](#))

Syria

April 29: Four new candidates enter Syrian presidential race, including one woman

“Sawsan Haddad, an engineer in the coastal city of Latakia, submitted her application to the Supreme Constitutional Court on Saturday, becoming the third runner for the presidential vote. The 51-year-old woman had been a member of the ruling al-Baath party until last year, when she withdrew from the party for undeclared reasons. Speaking to reporters at the constitutional court, Haddad said that it's about time for women to come forward to participate in top positions in Syria.” ([Xinhua News](#))

Tunisia

May 1: Tunisia withdraws its reservations to CEDAW

“Tunisia has officially lifted key reservations to the international women’s treaty, an important step toward realizing gender equality, Human Rights Watch said today. The Tunisian government should next ensure that all domestic laws conform to international standards and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.” ([Human Rights Watch](#))

May 2: Tunisia passes landmark election law for November vote

“Tunisian lawmakers adopted a sweeping electoral law Thursday that paves the way for November's general elections. The law requires party lists for the vote to be half women and half men, and allows members of the ousted regime to run for office.” ([France 24](#))

UAE

April 27: UAE lends support against physical violence

“The UAE has pledged its commitment to support all international efforts and initiatives aiming at finding solutions to ensure the elimination of sexual violence in conflict. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of UAE to the United Nations announced this in a statement at the open debate of the Security Council on Women and Peace and Security, Sexual Violence in Conflict which took place on April 25, with the participation of the UN Secretary General and his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflicts, Zainab Bangura.” ([Gulf Today](#))

April 28: Forbes Middle East Woman A Departure from the Norm

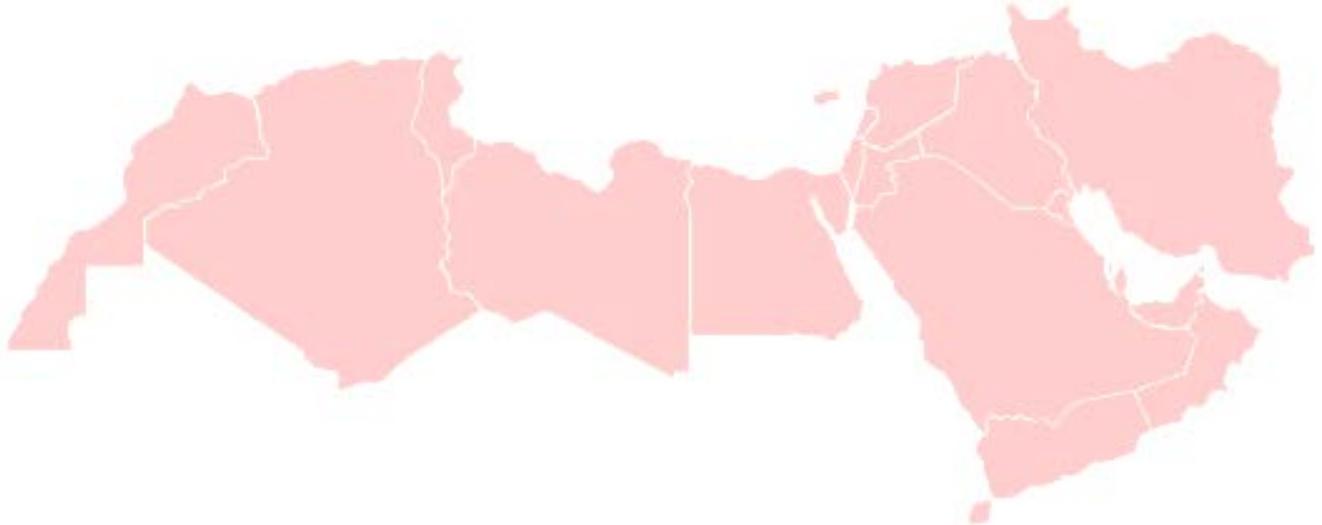
“In this issue, Scientific testing laboratory CEO Mary Jane Alvero-Al Mahdi discusses the importance of education, philanthropy and her early life in the vibrant Philippines, whilst fashion’s first lady, Reem Acra, tells her own inspiring story which began on Lebanese shores. Rounding off the triad, Riyadh-born Tunisian Lina Lazaar, a specialist at Sotheby’s, provides a window in the exciting world of Middle Eastern art.” ([Forbes Middle East](#))

April 30: Breaking the mold: Female entrepreneurs

“A growing number of networking groups have launched across the UAE, Gulf and wider Middle East, bringing together some of the most talented, ambitious, and business savvy businesswomen in the area, helping them to broaden their circles of experience, influence and interaction, and boosting female entrepreneurship as a whole.” ([Arabian Business](#))

May 4: Minister reiterates role in women’s empowerment

“Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, has reiterated UAE leaders’ keen interest in backing all efforts to promote an optimal and enabling environment for women’s education aimed at further empowering them to prove their efficiency in the labor market and contribute to the building of the nation.” ([Gulf Today](#))



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