



Women Journalists

Partners in Trade Union Leadership

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Preface

GENDER EQUALITY CAMPAIGNING has played a role in revealing the level of sexual discrimination that prevails in the Arab region, showing the gap between sexes and trying to create a fairer balance between the genders in the media and other sectors. The issue is promoted regionally but also as part of a global sea change in attitudes towards women that is seen both within and increasingly reflected by the media. This has been accompanied by improved education for women, improved training on gender issues for all and a steady feminisation of the media workplace in general.

The Arab audio-visual sector boasts many positive examples and images of highly professional Arab women journalists who have broken through the wall of gender discrimination and challenged and defeated old attitudes in the fight for the rights of women journalists. The satellite channels are leading the way as the highly competitive environment in which they operate has forced the adoption of modern, professional standards putting women in the front line of news gathering and presenting that diminishes the gap between men and women journalists and creates strong public images of women in the media.

Satellite channels have bred a new generation of women journalists famous for presenting news programmes on hot political topics in the Arab region and elsewhere. Meanwhile, women correspondents are regularly seen reporting from the field and emerging as recognized war correspondents for their reporting of the ongoing conflicts in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq. This has also broken down the door to women covering other hard news or traditionally male topics including economy, religion or sport.

Women journalists have overcome the barriers of time and place and set in stone a quality change in the media landscape acting as modern leaders in the transformation of media and journalistic practice. Women journalists emigrated to Europe, the Gulf countries and other regions, where they worked, trained and learnt from different Arab countries with different cultures concerning the status of women. The greater public readiness to recognize women's rights and presence in the public space along with their newly acquired skills and professionalism has enabled them to fit harmoniously into the media space.

Despite this progress, the reports of international and national conferences gathering women journalists in recent years reveal the persistence of discriminatory attitudes against women in the media. These continue to hamper the progress of women journalists work and prevent them from realizing their full potential and skills. Some of these obstacles are based on the traditional mentality that gives men priority in accessing leadership posts reinforcing the traditional career structures and barriers for Arab women; others are linked to the illness and highness of the media sector in the Arab World.

It is time for Arab women journalists to capitalise on their achievements on the professional level and in the news rooms, and claim their places in the management structures, media institutions and journalists' unions necessary for lasting change and equality for all in media.

Dr. Sabah el Mahmoudi

Institute of Press and Information Sciences (IPSI), Tunis

Introduction

This report is part of the Women Partners in TU Leadership, a campaign launched by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in 2008 to encourage women journalists in the Middle East and the Arab World to engage in trade-union work. It is a snapshot of the situation across the region and draws upon information available in recent publications, national and international statistics and official data, and information provided by the network of affiliates of the IFJ in the Middle East and Arab World region, with the aim to give fresh momentum to the struggle for change and women's rights at work in journalism.

It comes at a time when social and economic transformations underway in the Middle East are paving the way for improved gender equality.

The status of women across the region remains linked to social conservative practices and to the enforcement of Personal Status Codes which have largely been written in the spirit of the Sharia law, with the exception of Tunisia.

In recent years amendments have been made in a number of countries to improve women's rights such as in Morocco and Algeria. Most importantly, legal changes have occurred in the region to strengthen the representation of women at the political level, with the introduction of quotas for women in the legislative apparatus in a number of countries including Iraq, Morocco, Jordan, Oman, and Sudan.

Positive changes at the political level have an impact on the evolution of perceptions and improvements for women at the workplace. The media sector illustrates these changes, with rapid growth in the numbers of women journalists across the region and the broadening of the subjects they are expected to cover.

But if perceptions are slowly changing, working conditions and career development remain a challenge for women journalists. Working in the private sector, where no collective agreements exist can expose women journalists to further exploitation. This compounded by a widespread lack of knowledge of professional rights. Many women are ready to work without a contract, as a way out of unemployment because it opens the door to an independent working life.

Although Labour laws often guarantee equal salaries for equal work, the situation on the ground is differ-

ent. Women face difficulties to getting to top jobs and secrecy about salary scales is common. Too few women journalists are to be found in decision-making positions.

More women journalists are joining unions, but they remain poorly represented in their executive boards where men maintain, an overwhelming majority. Some unions in the region have adopted policies that promote women journalists in the union including, through increased participation in thematic committees or a quota for women in the board as is the case in Morocco. All the actors involved in defending women's human and professional rights see the benefits of creating synergies with civil society networks at the local, national and international levels.

These issues are a core concern of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) which is committed to campaigning for equal rights for women journalists around the world. Fair gender portrayal, fair participation both in the work of journalists and in career development, are IFJ goals. The IFJ's equality campaign is overseen by the IFJ Gender Council composed of activists nominated by IFJ affiliates from all regions in the world.

The *Women Partners in TU Leadership* campaign was launched in April 2008, to encourage women journalists to engage in trade-union work through training, networking and lobbying and stand for election to the decision-making bodies. The meeting which gathered in Tunis women journalists representing national journalists' unions from 11 countries adopted a set of priorities including the necessity to "Increase rate of representation of women in unions' leadership positions and consider the introduction of quota systems". These priorities were endorsed by the Casablanca regional meeting in May 2008 and further strengthened at the Amman regional meeting, held in October 2009.

This report is built in the form of facts sheets for a quick overview on the situation, with an introduction and facts on women's political representation and sections on women in the media, in journalists unions, and media schools. It gives facts and arguments for women journalists activists, to stand up for their rights and campaign for better working conditions in the newsroom and fairer representation in their unions.

Sarah Bouchetob, *IFJ Arab World and Middle East Projects and Campaigns Officer*



Women journalists in the Arab World and Middle East journalists' TU boards

Country	Union	Total board members	Women board members	Percentage
Algeria	SNJ	9	0	0%
Bahrain	BJA	11	1	9%
Egypt	EJS	13	1	7.7%
Iran	AoIJ	10	1	10%
Iraq	IUJ	11	1	9%
Iraqi Kurdistan	KJS	11	1	9%
Jordan	JPA	11	1	9%
Kuwait	KJA	7	1	14.3%
Morocco	SNPM	19	5	26.3%
Oman	OJA	11	1	9%
Palestine	PJS	9-13	0	0%
Somalia	NUSOJ	9	3	33%
Sudan	SJU	20	5	25%
Tunisia	SNJT	9	3	33.3%
UAE	UAE JA	9	2	22.2%
Yemen	YJS	13	1	7.7%
UAE	UAE JA	9	2	22.2%
Yemen	YJS	13	1	7.7%

Source: IFJ, January 2010.

ALGERIA

Introduction

Despite their active role in the history of the Algerian revolution and in the fight against fundamentalism in more recent years, the situation for women in Algeria remains difficult, largely as a result of the influence of religious extremist movements over the past 20 years. Slow reforms are taking place, in particular for a better representation of women in the country's political system.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Accession in 1996 with reservations including those with a relation to family matters and inheritance.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women employment in 2008 was 32.4% in 2008.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** The 1984 Family Code has symbolised for years oppression against women in the country. In 2005, the government amended the Family Code in favour of women and in November 2008, as part of the Constitution's amendment, article 31bis was adopted, that promotes women's political rights: "The State works to promote women's political rights by increasing their chances to access representative positions in elected assemblies". The modalities of the constitutional measure will be fixed by organic law.
- **Political representation:** Women were granted voting rights at the country's independence in 1962. As of August 2009, there were three women ministers in a cabinet of 35 (8.6%). Women make currently 6.4% of the Parliament membership (34 out of 533). In June 2009, a law proposing the introduction of a 30% quota for women in the elected assemblies was introduced by the National Union of Algerian Women (UNFA). The proposal will be discussed in the next parliamentary session. If voted, this text would reward the immense efforts and active campaigning deployed by the Algerian feminist movement.

Women in the Media

Although Labour law guarantees equal salaries for equal work, the situation on the ground is very different. In the media sector, women face difficulties being promoted to positions of responsibility. Journalists in the private media sector suffer from harsh working conditions, with no collective agreement protecting them. Young journalists and women are the most fragile. In salary scales, secrecy is the rule, but a national study conducted by the IFJ in 2008 show that 60% of surveyed women journalists felt they were not paid fairly, almost 50% could not obtain a promotion or career development and 33% assured that their male colleagues had received higher salaries than they had for the same work.

Women make up 25% of media-workers in Algeria (1000 out of 4000), according to a survey published in *Les Cahiers de Liberté* in 2009. The publication gives related results to those of the 2008 IFJ Gender survey conducted in Algeria, for the percentage of women journalists in the Broadcasting sector, over 60%.

The proportion of women in the print media is twice smaller and women journalists in decision making positions are less than 5% in the print sector and less than 10% in the Audio-visual sector.

Women in the union

Women journalists in Syndicat National des Journalistes (SNJ) are approximately 20% (although figures have not been updated since the creation of the union in 1999). The SNJ does not count any women in its board. In 2008 and 2009, the IFJ ran a series of gender meetings and workshops, creating the opportunity for an informal network of women journalists to train and exchange experiences. However, reform of the union and strengthening of its gender policy remain a challenge.

Journalism schools

Additionally to the Media Faculty at Algiers University, which is being restructured into a Higher Journalism School (Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme), there are 5 Media Institutes across the country. According to figures gathered from the Algiers Media Faculty, the proportion of women students in the academic year 2007-2008 was approximately 65%, and the proportion of women graduates 70%. A comparison with the other media institutes shows similar results.

Useful contacts

Syndicat National des Journalistes

Maison de la Presse, Tahar Djaout, Alger
snjalgerie2006@yahoo.fr

Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes

www.unfa.dz nouria_hafsi2007@yahoo.fr

Commission Nationale des Femmes Travailleuses (CNFT – UGTA)

http://www.ugta.dz cnft.ugta@gmail.com

Centre d'Information et de Documentation de la Femme et de l'Enfant (CIDDEF)

http://www.ciddef-dz.com/

l'Association pour l'Emancipation de la Femme (AEF)

aef.alger@gmail.com

Femmes en Communication

http://femmesencommunication.com/

Association Femmes Algériennes revendiquant leurs Droits (FARD)

http://fard-dz.org/

BAHRAIN

Introduction

Women's political rights have been a cornerstone of the political reforms initiated by King Hamad with the right being given for the first time to women to vote and stand as candidates in national elections after the constitution was amended in 2002. By adopting the measure, Bahrain became the first Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member to grant women suffrage. The extension of equal political rights has been accompanied by a policy of positive action to promote women to positions of authority within government. Women's level of education is often high, but their employment opportunities are limited; unemployment among women is almost twice as high as among men although the country's economic climate encourages entrepreneurship among both men and women.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Accession in 2002, with reservations regarding family law and citizenship matters.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women's employment in 2008 was 20.9%.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** The Constitution of 2002 provides equal rights to women and men of Bahrain and has improved the situation of women in many areas. In 2001, the Supreme Council for Women was launched, with the aim of promoting women's rights

and eliminating obstacles towards gender equality. The Council is headed by her Highness Sheikha Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, the King's sister. In 2002, women were at last granted the right to vote and to run for elections, and entered the Parliament through nomination.

- **Political representation:** In 2002, six women ran unsuccessfully as candidates for the Council of Representatives. In 2005, Alees Samaan became the first woman to chair a parliamentary session in the Arab world when she chaired the Shura Council (whose members are appointed by the King). In 2006, Latifa al-Gaoud ran for elections and became Bahrain's first and only female parliamentarian. The same year, Bahrain was elected head of the United Nations General Assembly, and appointed Haya bint Rashid Al Khalifa as the Assembly's President, making her the first Middle Eastern woman and only the third woman in history to take over the post. The 80 members-Bahrain Parliament counts 11 women and the country's government two women in a cabinet of 17.

Women in the Media

Quality programming on women and women's rights are rare, and media often convey a stereotyped image of women. Women make up 20% of Bahrain Radio and Television Corporation employees. In the print sector, women represent approximately 50% of journalists. In the Bahraini media, very few women hold leadership positions such as head of department or editors in chief.

There are reportedly less than 10 women journalists in the country occupying this kind of positions.

Women in the union

Women journalists in Bahraini Journalists' Association (BJA) make up 15% of its total membership (600 members, 515 men and 85 women). The association's board counts 2 women in a team of 11 (18%)

The BJA has a programme to support women journalists and raise junior women journalists' awareness of their professional rights and support their promotion in their media institutions.

Journalism schools

The Media Faculty of Bahrain University is the main school for media studies in the country. According to figures released by the Bahraini Ministry of Education in

2008, between 2001 and 2007: 61.46% graduates of the Faculty of Information Sciences were female students.

Useful contacts

The Bahraini Journalists' Association (BJA)

240 Road 3203, Manama 332, Bahrain,
Tel: 973 9693993, Fax: +973 725595
E-mail: bja@batelco.com.bh, alshaiji@alayam.com

The Supreme Council for Women

<http://www.scw.gov.bh>
PO Box 38886, al Manama, Bahrain
Tel: +97317417171, fax: +97317415307

Bahrain Women's Union (network of Bahraini Women Associations)

Tel:+17141180 00973

EGYPT

Introduction

The feminist movement started as early as 1923 in Egypt. In 1957, women participated and ran in parliamentary elections. Although women's rights in the country were fought for and gained early in the country, their status in society remains fragile. Egyptian women have limited influence at the national and community levels, despite having filled leadership positions in some state institutions and in the education field. The state encourages groups that advocate for women's rights but is not as supportive of groups that associate women's rights with the call for greater participation in the political system. Egyptian women organisations have been very active in recent years, fighting violence against women, and demanding a better political representation in the country.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** The Convention was signed in 1981 with reservations to provisions regarding family matters, inheritance and citizenship.

- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women's employment in 2008 was 22.5%.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** Egypt does not have a unified personal status code: different laws govern citizens from different religions. Egypt's new family courts are expected to help protect women and children's rights and reduce problems due to conflicting laws.
- **Political representation:** Women's suffrage in Egypt was granted in 1956. Following a strong national campaign a law was passed in June 2009 allocating 64 parliamentary seats for women and increasing the number of seats in the People's Assembly to 518. This positive action will ensure a 12% seats for women in the general elections due in 2010 (1% in currently). However, the new quota system is to be applied for two legislative terms only (10 years). In the government three women hold ministers' posts in a cabinet of 32.

Women in the media

Women make up approximately 35% of Egyptian journalists, according to the Egyptian Syndicate of Journalists (EJS). This rate is higher in the audio-visual sector, where

they represent about 50% of media workers. Women journalists are underrepresented in the management of state-owned newspapers but hold high-responsibility jobs in television. According to local reports there are less than 10%. Promotion and advancement remain a much more difficult challenge for women than for their male colleagues, although salary gaps between women journalists and their male colleagues are, reportedly modest.

The overall media content is male-controlled, particularly Egypt's political and news programs. Independent TV channels present excellent programs on which women lead courageous discussions of women's rights issues but programs emphasizing the roles of dominant men and submissive women dominate public television. The National Council for Women has created a Media Watch Unit to monitor the content of media messages relating to women.

Women in the union

Women journalists in the Egyptian Journalists' Syndicate count for 2400 members (approximately 34% of a total of 7000 journalists. In the EJS's board, there is one woman in a team of 12 (8.33%).

Journalism schools

In the year 2007/2008, female students made up 70% of the students at the Media faculty in Cairo

university. Similar proportions are found in other journalism institutes of the country. The proportion of female graduates is high with 75% in the year 2007/2008 at Cairo university. Joining media institutions however, is made more difficult for women, their male comrades being considered more suited for journalistic work.

Useful contacts

The Egyptian Journalists' Syndicate (EJS)

<http://www.ejs.org.eg>

Egyptian Feminist Union

<http://www.hodasharawi.com>

The National Council for Women

<http://www.ncwegypt.com/english/index.jsp>

The Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights

<http://ecwronline.org/index.php>

Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA)

<http://www.awsa.net/>

Egyptian Trade-Union Federation (ETUF)

http://www.etufegypt.com/Etfu_M/E_History_01.htm

IRAQ

Introduction

Until the mid-1980s, Iraqi women were guaranteed equal access to education and employment opportunities. The Iraq-Iran war, the Kuwait war, and the economic sanctions imposed by the UN on Iraq in the early 1990s, severely affected the educational and economic status of women. Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, factionalism, and religious militancy have been on the rise. Women suffer from high rates of illiteracy and unemployment. In Iraqi Kurdistan, women have enjoyed a relatively privileged status and a safer environment. Kurdish women leaders

successfully lobbied for a law against 'honour crimes' perpetrated against women. In this transitional period for Iraq, assessing the status of women's rights remains difficult.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Iraq ratified the Convention in 1986, with reservations that applied to women's rights in the private sphere.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment:** A 2003 UN/World Bank survey found that women comprised no more than 23% of the formal work force, mostly in the public sector and in rural areas as agricultural workers." According to the ILO, the share of women employment to overall employment in 2008 was 16.9%.

- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** The Unified Law of Personal Status, based on the Muslim Shari'a, was first codified in 1959 and has since gained 12 amendments. The 1970 Iraqi constitution and subsequent legislation granted women the right to work outside the home. Article 4 of the Unified Labor Code established the right to equal pay, while Articles 80 to 89 charged the State with the protection of women from harassment in the work place. The Iraq Civil Code of 1953 and all other state laws and decrees remain valid in Iraq until new ones replace them. The autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan has its own legal system. A new personal status law, more protective of women's rights, has been under discussion since the end of 2008, to replace the 1959 Iraqi law, but has not yet been adopted.
- **Political representation:** Iraqi women were granted voting rights in 1980. In 2003, women activists lobbied for a 40% quota for women in the National Assembly and any subsequent legislative bodies and secured a 25% minimum quota enshrined in the 2004 Interim Constitution (brought the number of women in the Parliament to 70). In 2009, the Iraqi government counted four women in a cabinet of 37. In Iraqi Kurdistan, several amendments were made to the Kurdistan Election Law in February 2009 to increase inclusiveness of all groups; the legal minimum quota of women MPs was increased from 25% to 30%. The last parliamentary elections in Kurdistan were held in July 2009; in the current parliament, 36 of the 111 MPs are women. In the 2009 Kurdistan Regional Government, there was only one woman in a cabinet of 21. Iraq is scheduled to hold national and provincial elections in 2010, which will lead to the amendment of the Iraqi Constitution.

Women in the Media

Before 2003, Iraqi women were well represented in the media. The conflict has strongly affected their presence in the media sector. Since 2003, 24 women journalists have died, targeted or as a casualty while performing their journalistic work. However, the large expansion Iraqi media has known in recent years, gradually brought women journalists in new media outlets. Women journalists pursue courageously their work and a number of them reached decision making posts as media directors.

Women in the Union

The Iraqi Journalists Union (IJU) counts more than 10,000 members worldwide, according to the union's figures. 2000 of these are women journalists, with 650 living in Iraq. The IJU has a 'Women Journalists Network', which aims at ameliorating Iraqi women journalists working conditions, and proposes job opportunities to unemployed women journalists and financial support to families of killed women journalists. The union's board counts one woman in a team of 11 (9%). The Kurdistan Journalists' Syndicate (KJS) counts 5484 members, 15% of whom are women (683). The KJS board counts one woman in a team of 9 (11%). It also has a very active Gender Council which implements a comprehensive programme of activities across the Kurdish region.

Journalism schools

The post-conflict breakdown in public order in 2003 resulted in increased violence directed at civilians, especially women. Universities and colleges reported a sharp decline in the attendance of female students because of insecurity and incidents of abduction, violence and sexual assault. The proportion of female students in journalism remains modest, in the country's main universities: Baghdad, El Sulaimania, Irbil and Dohuk universities. But statistics for the academic year 2009-2010 obtained by the IUJ show more nuanced figures: in Baghdad University, the Media Faculty counts 295 men students and 335 women students (53%), while the Broadcasting Department has 82 women students (14%) only and around 500 men.

Useful contacts

Iraqi Union of Journalists (IUJ)

<http://www.iraqijs.org/> ; iraqiju@yahoo.com

Kurdistan Journalists' Syndicate (KJS)

<http://www.kurdistanjournalists.com/>

Iraqi Women Media Centre (IWMC)

www.iwmc-iraq.org

The General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW)

<http://www.iraqitradeunions.org/ar/archives/001378.html>

The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq

<http://www.equalityiniraq.com/>

General Federation of Iraqi Workers

<http://www.iraqitradeunions.org>

JORDAN

Introduction

Important progresses were made in recent years in Jordan in the battle for gender equality. The status of women in the country is progressively changing and women gaining new rights. However, Jordanian women continue to face gender-based discrimination in Jordan's family laws, in the provision of social security benefits and more generally, at the workplace.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Signed in 1980 with reservations concerning family matters and ratified the Convention in 1992. The Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) monitors Jordan's compliance with CEDAW.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women employment in 2008 was 17.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** The Jordanian Constitution does not explicitly refer to gender equality; Article 6 states: "Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards their rights and duties on grounds of race, language or religion". The Jordanian Personal Status Code (1976), based on the Shari'a law, was amended in 2001 to improve women's rights, but most of the progressive amendments were rejected by a conservative House of Representatives.
- **Political representation:** Women's Suffrage dates back to 1974. The Constitution guarantees the rights of citizens, both men and women, to vote and run for elections. The government has encouraged women's participation in the public sphere through the nomination of women at key State decision making positions.

In 2003 the country established a quota for women in the House of Representatives reserving 6 seats out of 110 to women candidates. In 2007, seven seats were reserved in the Upper House of the National Assembly that counts 55 seats. The 2007 legislative elections witnessed the election of the first woman Member of Parliament outside the formal quota. 14 women now serve in the Parliament. The law also provides for a 20% quota for women in municipal council seats. In the new government

appointed at the end of 2009, there were two women ministers in a cabinet of 29.

Women in the Media

According to a 2005 report, published by the *Al-Ra'i* daily newspaper, women journalists represented 25% of the total number of Jordanian journalists. Two women journalists occupy editorial management positions (daily English newspaper and a magazine), and in the overall, women journalists in leadership positions do not number more than 1%, according to the Jordanian Press Association (JPA). Despite this, women journalists' numbers continue to augment, particularly in daily newspapers.

Women in the Union

Women journalists in the Jordan Press Association (JPA) represent 19% of all membership (154 members out of 808 journalists registered at JPA). Women journalists are found in both print and audio-visual media, but approximately 70% of are registered to work in print media or news agencies. The JPA board counts one woman in a board of 11 (9%). The union works at mainstreaming gender, encouraging women journalists presence in its Committees and raising junior women journalists' awareness on their professional rights.

Journalism Schools

Statistics of students in journalism in Jordan were gathered from two major universities: Yarmuk and Al Batra Universities, for the academic year 2007/2008. At Yarmuk university: women students in journalism made up 48% of the total number of students (total of 690) and 54% of the graduates. At Al Batra' university, records showed 42.37% of the students' total (355) and 54.64% of graduates are. These figures indicate a slight tendency of the feminization of the profession.

Useful contacts

Jordan Press Association (JPA)

www.jpa.jo

Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)

<http://www.jncw.jo>

Jordanian Women Union (JWU)

<http://www.jordanianwomenunion.org/en/Home>

KUWAIT

Introduction

In 2005, in a long awaited move, the Kuwaiti Parliament approved a bill granting women the right to vote and stand in elections. Kuwait was the first Gulf state to propose voting rights for women (1971), but the measure was repeatedly blocked by the conservatives. The approval of this bill signaled a new era for women's rights in the country.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Ratified in 1994, with reservations affecting nationality and political rights for women.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women's employment in 2008 was 24.1%. According to statistics released by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Planning in 2009, the proportion of women working in the state-owned sector reached 45%.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** Based on the Sharia law, the 1984 Personal Status Code and some other Kuwaiti laws contain gender based discriminatory provisions. The parliament's Women's Affairs Committee called for the amendment of discriminatory provisions of divorce and marriage laws. In 2008, the Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS) and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) organised a forum on women's rights and civil status law, to push the government to introduce changes in legislation.
- **Political representation:** With rights to vote and run for elections obtained in 2005, 27 women (among 275 candidates), ran for at the 2008 parliamentary elections. However, none of them won. 16 women were candidates in the 2009 parliamentary elections, four won seats (out of 50 seats in the Parliament) and became Kuwait's first female lawmakers. The Kuwaiti government was restructured in May 2009; two women hold minister's rank in the 15 members' cabinet.

Women in the Media

Although the image of women continues to be stereotyped, the media have contributed to raising women's issues and concerns and their aspirations for political

change. Since its formation in the 1950's the Kuwaiti media has mainly employed foreign Arab staff; 1991 was a turning point: after the liberation began the number of Kuwaitis hired in the local press increased and the contribution of Kuwaiti women emerged significantly. The Kuwaiti News Agency KUNA had 10 women journalists in 1978 and 45 in 2008 (33% of its journalists' staff) – according to the Kuwaiti Journalists' Association (KJA). Women journalists make up 20% of the profession – around 300 among 1500 journalists across the country). But rare are the ones in leadership positions, as Ghanima Al-Marzouq who launch Al-Marzouq media group in 1960 and Editor-in-chief Bibi Al-Marzouq of daily newspaper "Al-Anbaa"; The Labor Law (Art 27) guarantees to woman equal remuneration for equal work. Women workers who feel discriminated against, may file a complaint to the administrative court or to the National Assembly's Human Rights Committee.

Women in the Union

The Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) has 279 women members, 18% of its total membership. Only one woman sits in the 7 members KJA board (14.3%).

Journalism schools

Women's access to education began in the 1950s and has since provided Kuwaiti women with opportunities that have enabled them to become financially independent and pursue diverse careers. Kuwaiti women make up 70% of university students, according to national statistics. In 1992, a Higher Institute of Arts and Media Department at Kuwait University was established and has seen the proportion of female increase over the years. The Gulf University for Science & Technology also trains journalists in its Department of Mass Communication and Multimedia.

Useful contacts

Kuwait Journalists' Association (KJA)

<http://www.kja-kw.com>

Kuwait's Union of Women Societies

Al-Dasma, Block 5, Amina St. Off Al-Rasheed Main St., 70455, PO Box 64437, Tel: 22515485
Email: Theunion1994@hotmail.com

Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS)

Al Khalidia, PO Box 72452, q8iwoman@qualitynet.net

MOROCCO

Introduction

The Constitution of Morocco recognises the principles of gender equality and women's political rights. Women's status however remained marginal for decades, due to the persistence of patriarchal values and political conservatism. A strong women civil society activism in recent years led, during the 2000s to remarkable changes in the perception of gender equality issues, amelioration of women's rights through the amendment of the Family Code and the adoption of positive action laws.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Ratified in 1993, with reservations affecting nationality and political rights for women.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women employment in 2008 was 24.6% in 2008.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** In 2004 the family code (Mudawwana) was amended to abolish many discriminatory provisions towards women such as husband authority on household and wife, repudiation, and gave women equal rights in demanding divorce.
- **Political representation:** Women were granted voting rights in 1963. In 2002, a law was adopted that introduced a quota of 30 seats for women at parliamentary elections. In 2007, four more women were elected making the number of women represented in the parliament 34 among 325. At the municipal level, only 127 women were elected at the 2003 municipal elections out of 22816 candidates (0.55%). The poor performance led to the adoption of a quota of 12% (2009 communal charter). In the 2009 elections, 3406 women were elected out of 20458 candidates (16,65%).. There are currently 5 women ministers in a cabinet of 34.

Women in the Media

According to a survey conducted by the Moroccan Ministry of Communication in 2006, nearly 48% women journalists worked in the broadcasting sector and 33% in the Print media. A study published by the UNESCO the same year showed that women presence in leadership positions in the media does not go beyond 10%.

Women in the Union

In 2008, the Syndicat National de la Presse Marocaine (SNPM) congress passed a quota of 25% minimum participation of women in the SNPM board. The union's membership in 2009 reached 3056 members, 801 of them are women journalists (26.2%). The union's board counts currently 5 women in a team of 19 (26.3%). The SNPM has a gender council that aims to mainstream gender in its programmes, recruit and promote women journalists' rights.

Journalism Schools

According to the Superior Institute of Information and Communication (ISIC), the main Institute in the country for media studies, the proportion of women graduates between 2000 and 2007 was 41.4%.

Useful contacts

Syndicat National de la Presse Marocaine (SNPM)

www.snpm.ma

Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication (ISIC)

<http://www.isic.ma>

Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM)

<http://www.adfm.ma>

Union de l'Action Féminine (UAF)

<http://www.mtds.com/uaf>

National Union of Workers in Morocco (UNTM)

<http://www.untm.org/>

OMAN

Introduction

Oman was one of the first Gulf countries to provide women with political rights and begin integrating them into government structures. Universal suffrage was offered for the first time to both women and men in the 2003 elections, although selected groups of citizens of both genders had been voting since 1994. The traditional image of women is slowly changing as more women are becoming visible in their roles as political candidates and decision makers.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Accession in 2006.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women's employment in 2008 was 18.3%.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** Oman's Personal Status Law (Royal Decree No. 32 of 1997) is based on Shari'a law, assigning men and women different rights and responsibilities. The law provides women with the explicit right to work outside the home. Article 12 of the Basic Law prohibits gender-based discrimination at work and emphasizes justice and equality as pillars of Omani society. By law, men and women should receive equal pay for the same work.
- **Political representation:** Oman has a bicameral advisory parliament consisting of the appointed State Council (*Majlis al-Dawla*) and the elected Consultative Council, neither of which has legislative powers. Elections for the Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) most recently occurred in October 2007. The number of female candidates increased from 15 in the 2003 election to 21 in 2007, but for the first time since they were permitted to run as candidates in 1994, no women were elected to Majlis al-Shura; the sultan in 2007 appointed 14 women to the 70-member State Council doubling

the number of female members from 2004. At the government level, there are currently three women ministers in a cabinet of 32.

Women in the Media

Women journalists are found in all media sectors and outlets, but their majority work in the state-owned sector. The government has made efforts to hire public sector employees in a non-discriminatory manner, and over one-third of government employees in Oman are women, but only 5% occupy high-level posts. In the media, women do not number more than 10%, according to a recent report of the Oman Journalists' Association (OJA).

Women in the Association

The Oman Journalists Association was approved in November 2004. The association has 125 members of which 13 are women, slightly more than 10%. The current OJA board counts one woman in a team of 11 (9%).

Journalism Schools

During the 1990s, the number of female university graduates increased acting as a catalyst for empowerment. Women's enrollment in universities in 2008 was 48%, according to Omani government statistics, OJA reported (Total of 14091 students). The Sultan Qaboos University (largest in the country), Sohar University and the Arab Open University have all three Media and Information Departments.

Useful Contacts

Oman journalists' Association (OJA)

P.O Box 1366/ P.C 133 Al-Khuw Air, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: +968 24475449 / Fax: +968 24475448 / Email: oja2004@hotmail.com

Omani Women Association(OWA)

Supervised by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) <http://www.owam.net>

PALESTINE

Introduction

While there have been many positive changes for women under laws adopted by the Palestinian Authority, gender-based discriminatory practices and old laws still apply to situations not covered by new legislation. Women enjoy freedom of expression, but find it difficult to advocate for their social rights when all of Palestinian society suffers under Israeli occupation.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW:** The Palestinian Authority lacks the capacity to sign the CEDAW but its Convention's committee has actively supported projects aimed at improving the status of Palestinian women.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women employment in 2008 was 18.8%.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** Article 9 of the 1997 Basic Law of Palestine states that Palestinians will not be subject to "any discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, political convictions or disability." It also states that the principles of Islamic Shari'a are a major source of legislation. The 1976 Jordanian Personal Status Law remains in effect in the West Bank, as does the Egyptian Law on Family Rights of 1954 in Gaza; these old laws are considered gender-discriminatory.
- **Political representation:** After the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, women voted for the first time at the 1996 legislative elections. In the 88-seat Palestinian Legislative Council, 5 women were elected, less than 6%. After women demanded a quota of 30% in all decision-making bodies in 1996, some parties like the People's Party agreed to grant women 20% of seats in their decision-making ranks. At the municipalities' level a very modest quota was adopted, 30 seats for women out of a total of 3,081. With no elections held, the number is the result of appointments. There are currently 5 women ministers in a cabinet of 24. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), women represent only 3% of top decision-making posts—such as legislators and upper-level public servants.

Women in the Media

In recent years, women started engaging in all aspects of journalism fields, as photographers, camerawomen, and war correspondents for example. Women have also their own publications and broadcasting programmes through which they express their concerns. Many media outlets however, discriminate against women and project stereotyped roles of men and women.

According to the Palestinian journalists' Syndicate (PJS), women journalists are approximately 300, making up 20% of the total number of journalists across the West Bank and the Gaza strip. The majority works for print media or news agencies, a third in the broadcasting sector. No more than a dozen women are found in leadership positions within the media, as editors in chief, heads of departments in broadcasting, or media directors, according to the PJS.

Women in the Union

The PJS has no specific structure or programme dedicated to gender equality. However, women journalists are active and engaged in defending their rights and improving their situation both in the West bank and Gaza. Women make up approximately 15% of the PJS membership (120 members). The PJS board, which did not hold elections for more than 10 years, does not count any women in its executive board. Elections are scheduled in February 2010.

Journalism Schools

Women's access to education has been largely restricted by the ongoing armed conflict in the Territories and by the construction of the separation wall between Israeli and Palestinian areas. Three universities offer teaching in media sciences: Al Najah University in Nablus has a Department of Journalism and Mass Media and Al-aqsa university in Gaza a Media Faculty; Birzeit University has a Department in Media Studies as part of its Arts Faculty which had in the academic year of 2009/2010 a proportion of women students of 74%.

According to a 2005 survey conducted by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, there were 47% women students in Gaza and 55% in the West Bank, in Higher Education cycles.

Useful Contacts

Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate (PJS)

PO Box 219, Ramallah, Tel: 972-22963043

<http://www.p-j-s.org/>

Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC – West Bank)

<http://www.watcpal.org>

General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW – Gaza)

<http://www.gupw.net/index.php>

Union of Palestinian Women's Committees

(UPWC – West Bank)

<http://www.upwc.org.ps>

Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Center (PWRDC – West Bank)

<http://www.pwrdc.ps/>

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC – Jerusalem)

<http://www.wclac.org>

Palestine General Federation of Trade-Unions (PGFTU)

<http://pgftu.org/site2/>

SOMALIA

Introduction

The civil war and continuing absence of an effective central government have had a devastating impact on Somalia and its female citizens. The former British colony of Somaliland (northwest) declared independence in 1991, and the region of Puntland (northeast) declared autonomy in 1998. The country is currently controlled by various political, religious and regional factions. Insecurity, the lack of infrastructure, investment, unemployment, and corruption are real barriers to economic recovery. Women are frequently victims of clan and cultural violence. Getting their voices as role models in the society and as political representatives is a huge challenge.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW:** Somalia is not a signatory of the Convention.
- **Labour force Participation rate (ILO):** The rate of women participation in the labour force was 54.3% in 2008.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** The Somali Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. The Personal Status Code, is based on the Sharia' law and contains a number

of gender based discriminations. In recent years, there has been a strong resistance from islamist movements to the women entering the public sphere.

- **Political representation:** Women were granted suffrage in 1956. The composition of the Transitional Federal Parliament was changed in January 2009, to include another 200 representatives from the Islamist opposition and 75 representatives of citizens' groups and the Diaspora. The Parliament now counts 450 members. Somalia's Charter states that at least 12% of the Parliament shall be women (Article 29). As for the Somali government, it counts 2 women ministers in a cabinet of 43.

Women in the Media

Journalists in Somalia work in very difficult and precarious circumstances, as the country's crisis and insecurity go on unendingly. This unsafe working and living environment is particularly dangerous for women journalists; a large number of gender related violations including sexual abuse remain unreported for fear of discrimination or alienation from the society in line with the strictly conservative cultural values. Women journalists have been attacked and killed in the country for their journalistic work. Many female journalists abandoned their journalistic work after marriage due to pressure from their husbands.

According to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), Somali women journalists make up about 17% of the total number of journalists in the country, and the majority work in the independent broadcasting sector (11%). Women journalists rarely sit at the decision-making organs of media institutions. The actual numbers of women holding management or editorial positions is less than 1%, according to NUSOJ. When it comes to promotion and career development women journalists face discrimination and are paid less than male counterparts for equal work. There are no initiatives in place to promote gender equity and women journalists who do complain of gender discrimination in their workplace often risk dismissal.

Women in the union

The NUSOJ has a Women wing that aims to promote gender in the union structures and activities, organize Women Journalists and prepare policy recommendations for NUSOJ Supreme Council and Executive Committee. There is a quota of 3 seats (out of 9), for women in the union's Executive Committee. Journalists make up 16% of the NUSOJ membership (68 members). Three women sit in the union's board which counts 9 members (33%).

Journalism schools

In Somalia, privately owned universities are multiplying, but no journalism institute has been established. Mogadishu University started a Faculty of journalism which did not operate due to the lack of students enrollment linked to the high registration fees demanded. Despite this, a large number of professional workshops have been conducted by organizations and media houses, traditionally involving a quarter of women among the participants.

Useful contacts

National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ)

www.nusoj.org

Duniya Women Journalists Organization

Mrs. Hamdi Mohamed Kadiye

Email: xamdikadiye@hotmail.com

We Are Women Activists (WAWA):

<http://wawanetwork.net/ABOUT.php>

NAGAAD

<http://www.nagaad.org/lag/>

Coalition of Grassroots Women's Organization (COGWO)

<http://www.cogwosomali.org/>

SUDAN

Introduction

Following the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Central Government of Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army, a Government of National Unity was installed in Sudan in accordance with the Interim Constitution. The Darfur Peace Agreement was signed the following year. Historically, Sudanese women have become involved in politics from the mid-1940s onwards. Successive wars, political and religious radicalization have, however curtailed women's emancipation.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Sudan is not a signatory of the Convention.

- **Participation in labour force (ILO):** The rate of women participation in the labour force was 29.8% in 2008.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 and Interim Constitution define Sudan as multi-religious and a protector of cultural diversity. Article 5 stipulates that national legislation applicable to the southern part of the country shall be based on the values and customs of their people rather than upon Islamic law. Women's status is defined by Sharia law, which is the basis of national legislation applicable to the northern part of the country.
- **Political representation:** Women gained voting rights in 1964. A quota system guarantees female seats

and participation in federal and state legislatures. 25% of federal parliamentary seats are reserved for women. At the government level, there are 2 women ministers (Ministry of Social Care and Women and Child affairs and Ministry of Health) in a cabinet of 30. There are also two women Secretaries of State.

Women in the Media

Women journalists in Sudan have been present in the press and radio since the 1950's. However, lack of awareness and resources and male domination are some of the main impediments to women's visibility in the media and in the media companies. Social pressure and lack of training are also important factors that prevent women journalists from covering certain stories, and maintain conservative approaches which strengthen stereotypes. A 2008 gender survey conducted by the East Africa Journalists Association, "Enhancing gender Equality in the media in East Africa" found that the media across the region did not give fair and equal space and time to women's and men's voices.

SUNA News Agency counts approximately 30% of women journalists in its total staff of 430 and the Sudan public Radio has similar figure and proportion. Women journalists tend to work on full time basis, but the pay gap in the private media sector has been identified as a problem, despite the guarantees the labour law provides. Women journalists face difficulties in reaching decision making positions, but there are eight women editors-in chief of dailies and periodicals in the country, according to the Sudanese Union of Journalists' (SUJ).

Women in the Union

The SJU counts 478 women members out of 2199 journalists (22%). The Sudanese Journalist Union (SJU)'s Charter includes a policy to empower women in the media, raise their awareness and enable them to

get better employment opportunities and fairer working conditions. Policies are formulated collectively in regular meetings of the union where women and men participate equally. The union develops its programmes through a Gender Committee. The SJU board counts 5 women out of 20 members (25%).

Journalism Schools

The University of Khartoum, largest in the country has nearly 18,000 students, 55% of whom are female, and two media studies Departments, and Information Sciences. There are tens of universities, colleges and schools across the country, that teach journalism or Information Sciences. However, no national statistics of local surveys were available on number of women students or graduates in media studies.

Useful contacts

Sudanese Journalist Union (SJU)

www.sju-sd.org ; M-Titawi@yahoo.com

Sudanese Women General Union

P.O. Box 10732, Khartoum, Sudan

Tel: (249-11) 785749

Sudan Women's Association

<http://www.sudanwomen.org.uk/>

Sudanese Mothers for Peace

<http://www.sm4peace.org/home.html>

Women Forum

P.O. Box 7091, Khartoum, Sudan

Tel: 80557 71879 /Fax: (249) 11 777017

Sudan Workers Trade Unions' Federation

<http://www.swtuf.org/>

TUNISIA

Introduction

Tunisian women enjoy one of the most protective statutes in the Arab region since the adoption of the Personal status code (Code du Statut Personnel) in 1956, which guarantees women full citizen rights. Empowered with equal civil and political rights, women fully engaged in all aspects of public life. These guarantees have been reinforced through amendments of the Personal Status Code but numerous women groups continue to demand the elimination of all reservations on the CEDAW and the implementation of the rights gained in the laws. Women groups also advocate for freedom of expression, which exposes them to further censorship, as the case of the Tunisian Association of Democrat Women (ATFD) illustrates.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Signed in 1980, ratified in 1985, with reservations.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women employment in 2008 was 26% in 2008.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** Tunisia's legal reforms and the 1956 CSP helped to expand women's rights in matters of marriage, divorce, custody, education, employment and political participation. Amendments to the CSP in 1993, as well as legal reforms to the nationality code, the penal code, and the labor law, helped to increase women's rights. Following the amendments introduced to the Constitution in 1997, the text strengthened the principle of the equality of citizens by explicitly decreeing, through amendments to Articles 8 and 21, the inadmissibility of discrimination between genders. Gender-specific benefits exist for women in the labor force, particularly in the form of maternal protections.
- **Political representation:** Women's suffrage dates back to 1959. The formation of the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs in 1992 was one measure taken by the government to bring women into senior level politics. The percentage of women in the Parliament reached to 27,57% in 2009 (59 women out of 214 parliamentarians), and a woman was elected Parliament's deputy president.

Women are present in the Upper House, at a rate of 15%. At the local level, more than 20% of municipal councilors were women in 2000, compared to just 1.7% in 1975. There is currently one woman minister and four Secretaries of State in a cabinet of 43.

Women in the Media

Efforts to combat the negative stereotypes of women portrayed by the media have been organized by the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs, through awareness-raising campaigns for youth and for those who work in the media to help promote a positive image of women. Women represent half of the employees in the Tunisian media sector according to the Syndicat National des Journalistes Tunisiens (SNJT). 60% are found in the state-owned audio-visual sector, 53% in the state-owned press and 47% in the private press. There is a strong presence of women in leadership positions in the audio-visual sector, 52% according SNJT reports. Women journalists, however, often do not have the powers their title gives them. In the Print media, this figure sharply drops to 15%. Women journalists do not feel they suffer from important salary gaps compared to their male colleagues. Promotion and career development are mostly based on time-on the job/seniority.

Women in the Union

Women make up 46% of SNJT membership (420/910). Three are found in a board of 9 (33%). The SNJT Women's Committee, launched in 2002, made the issues of fair working conditions and presence of women' journalists in decision making positions, two of its main priorities.

Journalism Schools

According to national statistics, the number of women students reached 59% at the university level across the country in the academic year 2004-2005. Female students at the Institute of Press and Information Sciences (IPSI) reached 73,5% in the academic year 2006-2007.

Useful contacts

Syndicat National des Journalistes Tunisiens (SNJT)
nejibghouri@gmail.com

Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR)
<http://www.cawtar.org>

**The Centre of Research, Studies, Documentation
and Information on Women (CREDIF)**
<http://www.credif.org.tn/>

National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT)
<http://www.unft.org.tn/>

Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD)
112 avenue de la liberté 1002 Tunis Tel : 21671890011
Fax : 21671890032

Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT)
www.ugtt.org.tn

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Introduction

Emirati women have experienced gains in political, social, and cultural aspects of their lives, as the government has recognized the need to support women's participation in these areas. The government has worked to improve women's rights in recent years, though some reforms have been slow to take effect. Women are entering new professional fields such as engineering and information technology but restrictions still apply to some professions, including journalism.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Accession in 2004, with reservations.
- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** The constitution of the UAE, adopted in 1971 and made permanent in 1996 by the leaders of the seven Emirates, declares Shari'a as a principal source of law.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women employment in 2008 was 14.4%. Article 3 of the draft labour law directly addresses 'Emiratisation' a programme introduced by the government to promote employment in the private sector in an effort to reduce the UAE's dependence on foreign labour, resulting in a recruitment campaign targeting young Emirati women to fill quotas. The labour law provides gender-specific benefits and protections in the workplace, linked to maternity. In March 2008, the UAE's permanent representative to the United Nations stated that women constituted 66% of public-sector employees, and 30% of those held decision-making posts.

- **Political representation:** In 2006, the UAE introduced elections in its political system. The functioning of the Federal National Council, an advisory body whose members all used to be nominated, changed. Under the new regulation, half of its 40 members are appointed, the other half elected. In the 2006 elections, one woman successfully ran as a candidate, joining eight other women appointed to their positions in the advisory body, bringing the level of women representation in politics to 22.5%.

In 2004, for the first time, a woman was appointed in the Council of Ministers (Lubna al-Quassimi). There are currently two women ministers in a cabinet of 20.

Women in the Media

There are currently approximately 1000 journalists working in the Emirates, less than 30% of whom are women, according to the Association of journalists (UAE_JA). While there are no legal obstacles to women's participation in the media, social stigmas related to what is acceptable for women must be fully challenged and addressed if there are to be more women joining the profession.

The Emirati General Women's Union (GWU) develops activities that aim to improve the image of women in the media. A number of women who have achieved high-profile status on television use their fame as a platform to discuss women's issues in the Emirates and the Arab world in general.

Women in the Union

The UAE does not allow labour unions, but journalists can join the UAE Journalists Association, which was launched in 2001. It counts 798 members, 186 of whom are women. In the UAE- JA board two women sit in a board of nine (22,2%).

Journalism schools

Women have made great gains in education, particularly at the university level. The literacy rate of women in the UAE remarkably raised to 90% in 2007, according to the federal government statistics. There are some six Media/Communication Departments in the Emirati higher education system. Women currently make up more than 75% of the student body at the country's largest university, the National University in Al-Ain. This gender discrepancy is mainly due to the choice of many local men to study abroad.

Useful contacts

The UAE Journalists Association (UAE JA)

<http://www.uaejournal.org.ae/>

The Muthabara Foundation

<http://www.muthabarafoundation.com/>

The UAE General Women Union

<http://www.wu.gov.ae/en/>

Dubai Press Club (DPC)

<http://www.dpc.org.ae/>

YEMEN

Introduction

Since the country's unification in 1990, women have faced both new opportunities and new challenges in public life. The traditional values in Yemeni conservative society have encouraged women to remain in the home, remove themselves from public life, and confined them to stereotyped roles. At the same time, the government formulated policies encouraging women's participation in public life and a larger role for them in the government. Women, however, remain poorly represented, despite their proportion of 50% in the Yemeni population.

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** South Yemen ratified the convention in 1984 before unification, with reservations. The ratification remained valid under the unified Yemen, but laws were not amended to conform to CEDAW standards. Since 2000, the National Committee for Women works at proposing legal amendments in order to comply with CEDAW; some of these proposals have been accepted, others rejected by the Parliament on religious, social and political grounds, and some are ready to be discussed. Numerous civil society organisations prepare an annual report assessing the government's progress in implementing the Convention.

- **Women's Rights in the Constitution and Personal Status Code:** The 1994 Constitution stipulates that all citizens are equal in rights and duties, but a number of Yemeni laws including the 1992 Personal Status Law, are discriminatory against women.
- **Female Employment to Overall Employment (ILO):** The share of women employment in 2008 was 26%.
- **Political representation:** Women in Yemen can vote and hold public office but are greatly underrepresented in the government and legislative bodies. Political parties refrain from running women on their lists. Only one woman has been elected in 2003 to a 301-member Parliament. Only two women have been appointed to the 111-member Shura Council. Civil society organizations campaign for changes to the draft Election Law and demand the adoption of a quota system of 30% minimum representation for women. There are two women ministers in the Yemeni government, the Minister of Human Rights and the Minister of Social Affairs, in a cabinet of 35. In local councils, women represent less than 1% of the total membership.

Women in the Media

Women presence in the media outlets is increasing but remains very weak compared to those of men journalists. Women constitute 20% of the employees in the state-owned media (broadcast and print media),

according to the Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate (YJS). They are rarely found in leadership positions in their media institutions, where they make up 8%, according to the same source. The principle of equal pay for equal work is however observed in the sector, in general. Finally, women journalists face discrimination in regards to the issues they can cover, and are often confined to reporting on social, women and family affairs.

Women in the Union

Women make 12% of Yemeni Journalists Syndicate membership (156/1278). The YJS's national board counts one woman in a team of 13 (7.7%). Yemeni women journalists have consistently demanded better participation in the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) and called for the allocation to women of 15 % of the seats in the YJS board.

Journalism schools

Female illiteracy in the country remains a major issue and is estimated at more than 60%. In the academic year 2007/2008, women accounted for 28% of the total number of university students. Female students in Sanaa and Aden Journalism Faculties accounted for 21% of the total number of students in the year 2007/2008.

Useful contacts

The Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate (YJS)

www.yejs.org

Media Women Forum

<http://www.mwfye.org/en>

Supreme Council of Women's Affairs

<http://www.yemen-women.org>

Women's Forum for Research and Training

<http://www.wfirt.org>

Women Journalists Without Chains

<http://www.womenpress.net>

General Federation of Yemeni Trade-Unions

<http://www.gfytu.org/>



HOT TIPS FOR SUCCESS...

Leadership, a Partnership Approach: The leadership approach proposed is participative rather than competitive. It relies on ambition and solidarity as key elements and the idea of women as essential partners for change.

Opening the Debate widely in the union, with women and men colleagues: many of them are supportive of stronger presence of women in leading positions. To ensure wide participation, make sure that debates take place at a suitable time/place for everyone.

Influencing Change: identifying the obstacles is the first step on the road to change! Following that, are the improvement of advocacy skills, identification of factors that will convince stakeholders and influence decision makers.

Setting Clear Objectives: discuss and set clear and reachable targets, progressive action plan based on concrete data: where are we, and where do we want to be? What are the adequate tools to be better represented in decision making bodies: Quotas? Free elections? Gender Councils? Unions' general policies?

Effective Communication and Networking: strengthen your communication and explore the possibilities of building working groups and national/regional solidarity networks. Remember that each success counts so make them known!

Keep and Follow-up! Identify strategies to maintain networks and motivation, explore new ways to keep equality on the agenda. Promote women's access to leadership through active and regular participation to events, projects, targeted local campaigns and elections!

The Leadership Program: consists of a series of seminars and training sessions designed to help women journalists become leading forces in their unions. Two days sessions blend theory with strategy and practical applications. The sessions also create networking opportunities among participants and foster regional solidarity.

IFJ Arab World and Middle East Regional Meeting • Amman 5-7 October 2009

In its opening day, the meeting discussed the issue of gender equality inside the unions and within the media sector in the region, and adopted the following programme and recommendations:

- Adopt practical mechanisms to support initiatives towards increasing the percentage of women representatives in leadership positions within the journalists union, associations, and media companies.
- Organize more professional training workshops for women journalists.
- Organize more training workshops on gender equality issues for men and women journalists.
- Adopt practical tools to provide all kinds of protection for women in the media while doing their job.
- Mainstream gender issues in all policies, internal rules and charters governing the work of journalists' unions and media companies (constitution, working rules, codes of ethics, collective agreements, editorial charters, etc.)
- Establish a journalists' prize for media coverage that respects gender equality.
- Update the regional Gender Equality report.
- Encourage journalists' unions and associations to establish structures to work on gender equality and the media.
- Identify tools to guarantee equal pay and conditions in contracts, and offer the necessary protection to those with precarious and vulnerable contracts and working conditions.
- Involve women journalists in all stages of building policy and editorial charters in the media company.
- Call on journalists' unions and associations to address the fall in numbers of women journalists who are abandoning the profession.
- Develop a focus of work on women journalists in conflict zones.
- Call on the IFJ gender council to provide the necessary support to the IFJ affiliates without it trying to impose its own agenda on them.



Group photo IFJ regional meeting in Amman, October 2009.

Resources

United Nations (UN)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://un.org/Overview/rights.html>

The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw>

Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm>

United Nations Millennium Development Goals

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

<http://www.unifem.undp.org>

UNESCO Gender Equality Portal

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3160&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

The IFJ Gender Booklet, 2009

<http://www.ifj.org/assets/docs/129/002/c98b281-47dbb02.pdf>

Portraying Politics

www.portrayingpolitics.net

The IFJ Gender Council

<http://www.ifj.org/assets/docs/140/127/30eb48c-5edec7f.doc> or contact the IFJ Gender Co-ordinator at Pamela.morniere@ifj.org

Arab World and Middle East/Gender Equality and Leadership

<http://mena.ifj.org/en/pages/mena-gender>

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Bureau for Gender Equality

<http://www.ilo.org/gender/lang--en/index.htm>

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Equality/Women

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/-women-.html?lang=en>

CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The Convention defines discrimination against women as “...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms.

THE IFJ GENDER COUNCIL

The IFJ's equality campaign is overseen by the IFJ Gender Council composed of women and men activists nominated by IFJ affiliates from all regions in the world. The council develops the IFJ's gender policies, and drives their adoption by affiliates providing an essential link to national unions' activities. The council meets once a year, evaluates the IFJ campaign actions, approves the upcoming work programme and reports on the results to the IFJ Executive committee.



The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that promotes coordinated international action to defend press freedom and social justice through the development of strong, free and independent trade unions of journalists. The IFJ mandate covers both professional and industrial interests of journalists.