

For activists and academics—and everyone in between

## Who said this?

“It seems that we have not received anything more than men receive except pain. This reverses the Qur’anic injunction that says: “One man’s share shall equal two women’s share.” (c.f. “Bad Deeds of Men: Injustice”)



**Bahithat Al-Badiya**

## Opportunities

### Call for Papers

The editorial committee of *Al-Raida* invites submissions for the Summer/Fall 2013 non-thematic, peer reviewed issue.

**Deadline for complete manuscripts: May 1, 2013.**

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### Call for Papers

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## First Civil Marriage on Lebanese Soil

“Civil Marriage: Challenges and Consequences”

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## 10 Years after the Invasion – What Happened to Iraqi Women?

Nadje Al-Ali

Ten years after the invasion, Iraq hardly makes headlines outside of the recent “anniversary” special features. If the country gets a mention in the media, it is mainly coverage of a restricted range of issues: car bombings, political tensions and corruption, sectarianism, the creeping rise of political authoritarianism, and the unresolved disputes over Kirkuk, oil and the question of federalism. Women and gender-based rights and justice seem to have dropped off political agendas and out of public concern. Yet, similar to the political justifications for invading Afghanistan, Iraqi women were initially used to justify the invasion and the broader mission to support human rights and democratization. In the first couple of years after 2003,

Iraqi women had been regularly used as yard sticks to document the success and progress of the US-led invasion and occupation. However, with the increase in political violence, insurgence and sectarianism, human security concerns were quickly replaced with national security concerns, with huge implications for women’s ability to participate and shape the political, social and economic processes and transformations of the past decade.

Rather than reiterating the largely devastating impact of the invasion and occupation on Iraqi women’s lives<sup>1</sup>, I would like to shift focus to local political actors and developments. While there is no doubt that the current regime emerged and gained in strength under the occupation, its dynamics, characteristics and actions cannot simply be reduced to foreign military

intervention and political failures. For me, one of the ironies and paradoxes of this 10<sup>th</sup> “anniversary” is that we almost seem to have come full circle in terms of an authoritarian, highly militarized regime that is employing force, violence and intimidation to limit dissent, and eliminate political opponents. Nouri al-Maliki is emerging as the new über-patriarch in a highly divided society, instrumentalizing, frankly unrealistic, fears of a Baathi come back. While the government’s wrath is targeted at all political opponents, the regime’s wider tone, discourses and policies have been deepening sectarian divisions. Sunni opposition groups, including some extremist militias and Islamists, are regrouping and talking of their “Arab Spring.” One can only hope that those ready to take up arms

## 10 Years after the Invasion – What Happened to Iraqi Women (from p.1)

once again and engage in devastating bombing campaigns, mainly targeting innocent Shia civilians, are in too small numbers to further settle an already unstable and precarious situation. However, as we are painfully reminded when watching the news, even small numbers can have detrimental effects.

Clearly, a decade after the invasion, security -or rather the lack thereof - is one everyone's mind. In addition to the general on-going lawlessness and insecurity, the Iraqi government is failing to counter the increase in gender-based forms of violence, ranging from high numbers of domestic violence, forced marriages, forced prostitution and trafficking as well as FGM and honour-based crimes and killings. There is no political will to either criminalize gender-based violence or, maybe even more importantly, to implement existing laws. Meanwhile, women bear the burden of the extremely limited basic services, ranging from electricity, access to clean water, sewage, health care and education. A decade after the invasion, the Iraqi state has been unable to provide an adequate infrastructure and sufficient employment opportunities, with large numbers of Iraqi men and women still being unemployed. The high number of female-headed households and widows without proper support accounts for the increase in the feminization of poverty.

Politically, Iraqi women have very limited political influence and power to contribute to decision-making, as I have recently stated in an article published as part of the wider Cost of War project.<sup>2</sup> To some extent, this is a direct consequence of the re-emergence of political authoritarianism under Prime Minister Al-Maliki: all political actors experience systematic sidelining of political opposition, a lack of rule of law and widespread political violence. However, women are particularly marginalized in a context where they are perceived to be incapable to lead and strategize, where social attitudes have shifted towards more conservative gender norms, and where armed violence, political

intimidation, attacks on political opponents as well as rampant corruption are shaping politics<sup>3</sup>.

Women have participated in the protests on Baghdad's Tahrir Square and in the Kurdish region, particularly in Sulimaniya. In June of 2011, a group of women demonstrating for peace and democracy were physically attacked and some sexually abused on Tahrir Square. For many months, groups of students and activists had been gathering in that square, demanding government reforms, jobs, more electricity and clean water. Protesters were brutally beaten by the police, arrested, some disappeared, and a number of organizers were killed, in what many activists allege are targeted assassinations ordered by Prime Minister Maliki. At a human rights conference attended by international organizations in June 2011, one of the leading women's rights activists, Hanaa Edwar, stormed in with a placard to protest against the disappearance of four activists who had been demonstrating publicly against the government. She was also challenging Maliki's allegation that some Iraqi human rights organizations were fronts for terrorists.<sup>4</sup>

Not all is bad in Iraq today. The Kurdish region is flourishing economically, the infrastructure and education systems are vastly improved and young women in large numbers are venturing out to get degrees in higher education and find properly paid jobs. In central and southern Iraq, women are mobilized across ethnic and religious divisions, largely united in their struggle for greater equality and against sectarianism. A proliferation of newspapers, TV and satellite channels, radio programmes, and access to the Internet make it much more difficult for the government to monopolize and control information flows and knowledge production. Shops and malls are appearing in Baghdad and other cities, and those with jobs welcome the increase in salaries. Yet, even the positive developments lead to a further polarization of Iraqi society with large numbers of Iraqis feeling disenfranchised and impoverished.

Having closely watched political developments unfold in Iraq over the past 10 years, I have learnt that just

because elections are held, it does not mean democracy is being implemented. Worse, in the absence of viable democratic foundations, elections could become a dangerous exercise and fuel political violence. Winning elections tends to become a matter of death and life since the "winner takes all" and his power (it is always a he!) is unrestrained. Moreover, I learnt from Iraq that a commitment to basic principles of freedom and equality is a prerequisite for elections to generate anything remotely democratic. I have learnt that democracy is not merely about representing the majority, but it is about assuring the rights, freedoms and safety of those parties, communities or individuals who lost or are in the minority. Democracy is about assuring that those who have different views from those who have gained political control can still be expressed without sanctions or negative consequences, except if they are inciting to hatred and violence, of course. There is a very thin line between populism and democracy that is difficult to balance.

Nadje Al-Ali

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<sup>1</sup> See Nadje Al-Ali & Nicola Pratt (2009) *What kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation of Iraq*, Berkeley, University of California Press.

<sup>2</sup> <http://costsofwar.org/article/who-we-are>

<sup>3</sup> See Nadje Al-Ali (2013) 'The forgotten story: Women and gender relations 10 years after' Costs of War Project, <http://costsofwar.org/article/did-wars-liberate-afghan-and-iraqi-women>

<sup>4</sup> [http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/post/s/2012/06/06/has\\_the\\_iraq\\_experiment\\_failed](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/post/s/2012/06/06/has_the_iraq_experiment_failed)

<http://iraqidinarnews.net/blog/2011/06/06/human-rights-group-fight-back-after-maliki-terror-jibe/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/06/world/meast/iraqi-women>

## First Civil Marriage on Lebanese Soil “Civil Marriage: Challenges and Consequences”



**K**holoud Sukkarieh and Nidal Darwish are the first Lebanese couple to contract a civil marriage on Lebanese soil. Their marriage reignited the issue of civil marriage and put it on the spot light. A national discussion ensued and provoked a reaction from religious figures.

The couple, who are both Muslims, but from different sects, opted for a civil marriage in an attempt to take a stand against the confessional system in Lebanon. After numerous consultations with legal experts, the couple decided to write off their religious sect to benefit from an existing Lebanese law issued in 1936 under the French Mandate which states that people not belonging to a specific sect are allowed to have a civil union.

Given the fact that this issue was extensively highlighted in the media, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at the Lebanese American University decided to shed light on the issue by hosting a panel discussion on March 12 on the occasion of International Women's Day. The panel entitled "Civil Marriage: Challenges and Consequences" hosted several experts as well as Kholoud and Nidal who discussed the issue from several angles namely civil marriage in Lebanon, its history and its link to personal status codes as well as the feasibility of contracting a civil marriage in Lebanon.

The experts were: Dr. Ogarit Younan, president and founder of the Academic University of Nonviolence and Human Rights in the Arab World and a well-known

human rights activist; Mr. Nizar Saghie, a leading lawyer, human rights activist and one of the founders of the [Legal Agenda](#); Mr. Joseph Bechara, the public notary who drafted the marriage contract of Kholoud and Nidal; and Ms. Nour Hassan, a trainer on non-violence and member of a non-governmental organization called [Chaml](#).

Activists, officials and students attended the event. The presentations were very rich and informative and triggered a lot of interesting discussions about the implications of contracting a civil marriage for women's rights in Lebanon. Kholoud and Nidal registered their union at the public notary and their marriage has been approved by the Higher Committee for Consultations at the Ministry of Justice, yet it is still awaiting the approval of the Minister of Interior to be acknowledged by the government. One question that remains to be answered is: will the marriage of Kholoud and Nidal be registered and approved or will it be forgotten in the drawers of oblivion at the ministry because it threatens the confessional system in Lebanon?

### WHO IS SHE?

#### Profiling: Bahithat Al-Badiya

Malak Hifni Nasif (1886-1918), the poet, woman of letters, educator and feminist, best known by her pseudonym, Bahithat al-Badiya (seeker of the desert) was famous for her support of girl's education in Cairo, late nineteenth and early twentieth century. She lectured on Fridays to a large group of women at Fuad 1 University (Cairo University today) and in the offices of the liberal party newspaper, *al-Jarida*.

Her essays in *al-Jarida*, which appeared under the title *al-Nissa'iyat* were collected and published in 1910. These essays addressed social issues such as veiling and unveiling, the upbringing and education of girls, marriage and polygamy, comparing Egyptian women with European women etc... At that time, this consciousness of *al-Nissa'iyat* combined women's issues with issues of Islamic reform and the independence of Egypt after a long history of foreign occupation.

For Arab women today, Malak Hifni Nassif remains an inspiration because she represented all sectors of the society, and was not elitist. She intelligently analyzed the relationship between men and women, before even the term "gender" came into use. Today, we use *al-Nisswiya* as a term that developed from *al-Nissa'iyat*, to refer to women's advocacy and feminist writings



Prepared by Dr. Hosn Abboud

## The Emerging Social Contract: Challenges to Women's Participation

Arab women today are healthier, more educated and arguably face less restrictive laws. Yet flagrant statistics clearly indicate that their economic and political participation has lagged behind. The Arab uprisings came to prove that Arab women are perfectly capable of taking a leading political role. The echoes of thousands of Arab women's voices chanting in unison to demand dignity, freedom and social justice defied not only the autocratic regimes but also the long legacy of subordination. Now, it is only natural for women who equally defied the old regime in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt to be actively involved in shaping the emerging social contract that stipulates the social, political and economic obligations and rights between the state and citizens. Given the dominance of Islamist parties on the formal political map, it is not clear how things will work out. Yet, one thing remains clear. At a time when the Arab citizen has entered an unprecedented state of anger and frustration, the Arab woman has entered an unyielding state of empowerment. Progress towards a new social contract and social justice will not be forged unless this new reality is taken into account.

Women's literacy rates are now on par with those of men in many countries, with Jordan and Tunisia achieving near-equality. In Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, women's enrolment in state universities is higher than men's. In the GCC countries, society is not yet receptive to working women. Given the option of staying home, women opt for continuing their education. Gains in women's education led to declines in mortality and fertility. During the late 1970s the death rate in the Arab world stood at 12 per 1,000 people; this fell by more than half to 5.6 per 1,000 people in 2010.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these advances in education and health, women remain excluded from the formal economic sphere. The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century saw only a minute rise, from 25% in 2000 to 26% in 2010. The share of women in the labour force declined in Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Somalia and Syria.

Today less than 25% of women aged 15 and older in the Arab world participate in the labour force – the lowest share anywhere in the world. In North Africa, for instance, women's participation in the labor force in 2009 stood at 26%—less than one-third that of men.<sup>2</sup> Egypt shows an alarming trend. Young women are four times as likely to be unemployed as young men.<sup>3</sup> Employer discrimination, particularly against married women, is one of the reasons behind this phenomenon. The perception that women are expensive labour and that their productivity drops especially after marriage and childbearing is partly valid in the absence of infrastructural (whether legislative or institutional) support for working women. For example, the burden of maternity leave – where it exists – is solely on the employer and not the state.

As much as these statistics are indicative, they don't do women justice. Women in the Arab region contribute to the economy, but their activity remains largely concentrated in "informal" and "unmeasured" activities such as domestic homework and assistance in family enterprises or agricultural employment. Women are offered low or no remuneration with little access to social security. Poor women employed in the informal economy also face dehumanizing working conditions and gendered violence. The main factors affecting women employment are not only related to cultural and legal norms but also to the lack of decent employment opportunities themselves that an inclusive growth would have generated.

Labour legislation in Arab States continues to exclude large numbers of workers from legal and social protection, including agricultural workers, domestic workers, and workers in precarious employment. For women, where legislation facilitates their entry into the labour market, the absence of social infrastructure such as subsidized child-care centres overload women. Informality, abusive working conditions, and draining work overload can only be addressed through a rights-based approach that extends to society at large.

### NGO Highlight

#### The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD)

It is a feminist association that fights against all forms of discrimination against women and promotes equality between the sexes, democracy and social justice.

The ATFD is a member of the International Federation for Human Rights, and known for establishing the 1<sup>st</sup> Tunisian counseling center for women victims of violence and the "Feminist University of Ilhem Marzouki"

To know more about The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women go to the following link: [www.femmesdemocrates.org](http://www.femmesdemocrates.org)

So far, legislative reform in the Arab region is largely cosmetic. The representation of Arab women in formal political space remains modest. Across the region, the share of seats held by women in parliament has risen only slightly since 2000, from 7% to 13% in 2012<sup>4</sup>. However, contrary to the situation in 2000, the activism of Arab women in the informal political life has never been as remarkable. The systematic political suppression of women, manifested in cases of epidemic sexual harassment in Egypt, failed to scare off women. In Egypt, a lot of women's NGOs now offer services like free legal help, psychological counselling and self-defence classes. In a step to stop the social acceptability of sexual harassment, a group of volunteers launched HarassMap, an SMS-based system that maps out and documents harassment incidents.

"But how will this grass root activism translate into the necessary legal, institutional and

educational reforms that would remove all barriers to women's empowerment at all levels?

Essentially, the social contract governing the relationship between Arab ruling regimes and citizens cracked down. Up until 2010, the contract's fundamental pillars, whereby freedom is hijacked in exchange for the provision of basic living conditions, proved to be part of marketing campaign that was detached from reality especially in Egypt and Tunisia. Today, more than one-fifth of the population in the Arab region lives on less than of US\$2-a-day per person.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, 32% of young men and 54% of young women, aged 15-24 years-old, were unemployed in 2011.<sup>6</sup> Amid unyielding mobilization and momentum, especially among women, resuming business as usual is not an option for the new ruling elite, whether Islamist or non-Islamist. Arguably, the region's short experience with Islamist parties in power indicates that removing such barriers will only be achieved in partnership with liberal and progressive political parties who advocate for civil rights for all citizens irrespective of religion, gender and ethnicity. And for this to happen, women should – in parallel with grass root activism – be equally engaged in official political parties and the democratic channels of change (elections).

The upheavals in the Arab region have created a window of change that cannot be shut down. Women are not alone in this quest for change and should actively join forces with the emerging social forces, be it new political parties or civil initiatives.

Farah Choucair\*

<sup>1</sup> World Bank. WDI 2012.

<sup>2</sup> ILO and UNDP 2012. *Rethinking Economic Growth: Towards Productive and Inclusive Arab Societies*.

<sup>3</sup> Assad, Ragui and Barsoum, Ghada, Youth Exclusion in Egypt: In Search of 'Second Chances' (September 2007). Middle East Youth Initiative Working Paper 2.

<sup>4</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union. *Women in national parliaments September 2012*.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank. WDI 2012.

<sup>6</sup> ILO and UNDP 2012. *Rethinking Economic Growth: Towards Productive and Inclusive Arab Societies*.

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## “Gender Perspectives in Case Studies across Continents”

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The E-book brings together case studies on decentralization, violence, women's political participation, education and labor from Latin America, Europe and Africa.

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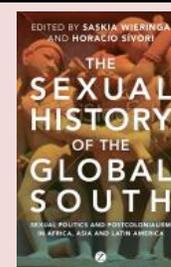
## Want to Share your Thoughts & News?

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We are interested in articles, announcements about events, conferences, workshops, film-screenings, and social initiatives, related to women and gender issues in the Middle East, North Africa and beyond.

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### The Sexual History of the Global South

*Sexual Politics in Africa, Asia, & Latin America*

Editors: Saskia Wieringa & Horacio Sivori

Date of Publication: April, 2013

The Sexual History of the Global South explores the gap between sexuality studies and post-colonial cultural critique. Featuring twelve case studies, based on original historical and ethnographic research from countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the book examines the sexual investments underlying the colonial project and the construction of modern nation-states. Covering issues of heteronormativity, post-colonial amnesia regarding non-normative sexualities, women's sexual agency, the policing of the boundaries between the public and the private realm, sexual citizenship, the connections between LGBTQ activism and processes of state formation, and the emergence of sexuality studies in the global South, this collection is of great geographical, historical, and topical significance.

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## No Excuse for Legislators

**I**t is not trivial facts, but rather exceptional ones that push us, both male and female Lebanese citizens, to demand the enactment of a law that protects women from domestic violence, and we call upon the legislators to follow in our track. Laws cannot just be based on customs and beliefs, or on conventions and treaties... The legislative body, i.e., the MPs "representing" us, both male and female citizens of the Republic, should primarily rely on *facts*, as these constitute the critical factor for passing such a bill.

Facts speak for themselves... We just have to listen to them attentively. They tell us the following:

**First:** Domestic violence perpetrated against women is a fact that cannot be denied. Testimonies revealed by courageous battered women in courts, on television, in documentaries, as well as those unveiled in private to physicians, nurses, psychotherapists, social workers, religious service providers, lawyers, and the security forces, etc... reveal the atrocities of such abuses. Detailed information related to such abuses is documented, and the published works of both male and female researchers are available to the public in all traditional and new media outlets.

**Second:** A law is needed to protect women because the overwhelming majority of adult victims of domestic violence are women. Women who use violence against their husbands (or against other male relative), do so in self-defense; their percentage never exceeds 5% versus 95% of male perpetrators.

**Third:** Women are victims of violence because they are women, and not because they are physically or socially disadvantaged, young, weak, powerless, or elderly, or because they lack social support. Women might be strong, competent, young, and have a successful career... But they will be battered anyway, It is not competence, strength, good physical condition, youth or professional independence

that would guarantee women's security and safety at home. Unlike other members of the family who might suffer from abuse, women are abused because customs and beliefs have "normalized" violence against them rendering it invisible.

**Fourth:** Family femicide is no more than the maximization of normalized and ongoing violence against women (VAW henceforth) that culminates in murder. Enacting a law that protects women from family violence will prohibit murder and prevent the tragedy of turning the victims' husband (fathers or brothers, as the case may be) into criminals, the victims' children into orphans, and the victims' family into a stigmatized one.

**Fifth:** Women cannot rely on the family circle to ward off violence. Those who are abused by their husbands (or by any other male relative), rarely find support in their family entourage. Moreover, when battered women seek protection from people outside their close family circle, be it the local community civil or religious leader or the police personnel, they are likely to be 'advised' to 'bear their lot' for the sake of guarding their family unity or in the hope of 'gaining' the bliss of Paradise in their afterlife', thereby ensuring the perpetuation and intensification of such abuse.

**Sixth:** In Lebanon, it is not mandatory for police officers, lawyers, physicians, social counselors, colleagues in the workplace, neighbors, friends, clergymen, etc..., or any other potential witness of women subjected to family violence to report such abuse. Legally, they are not under any obligation to report on domestic violence, nor do they benefit from any legal protection in case they did. Thus, deprived of forthright legal authority, those persons too are not obliged to report VAW they witness and help in putting an end to it.

**Seventh:** Both male and female Lebanese citizens have condemned VAW on many occasions and in

various ways. Their protest movement was mainly addressed to the parliament, in order to enact a comprehensive law that would deter abusers, punish them, and safeguard women. They have also called on the state to bear the responsibility for both enacting laws and implementing them with respect to domestic violence.

Based on the described situation, we say the following to our legislators:

**First:** MPs need to remember that they are mandated by both male and female citizens to pass laws that safeguard their safety and security all over the Lebanese territory. They are also responsible vis-à-vis the international community to promote women's rights including their rights to safety. Hence, our MPs have to assume the responsibilities incumbent on them by passing a law that protects and safeguards women everywhere including in the household.

**Second:** The Lebanese state, through its judicial, security, and social institutions is responsible for the enforcement of civil law and may not delegate this responsibility to any other authority such as the religious or the familial institutions.

**Third:** When it comes to enacting a law to protect women from family violence, legislators may not rely on common beliefs, customs and general perceptions notoriously known to be gender-biased. Legislation concerning the situation of Lebanese women has to be based on solid examination of the prevailing situation of the abuse of skewed power relations in the family.

**Fourth:** Facts concerning domestic abuse of women are documented and made available to the public via field studies, research-based reports, journalistic investigations, and audio and video recordings. Moreover, MPs can resort to oral testimonies by calling on battered women, or by interviewing witnesses of 'traces and marks' of abuse left by perpetrators on the bodies and souls of victims...witnesses such as health professionals, psychotherapists, educators, researchers, lawyers, security forces,

## Highlights

### Ms. Haifa Al-Kaylani: Muslim Woman of the Year Award for 2013

Ms. Haifa Al-Kaylani, founder chairperson of the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) has received the Muslim Woman of the Year Award for 2013 in the United Kingdom.

Ms. Al-Kaylani received the award in the presence of around 500 men and women leaders from the British Muslim community who attended the official ceremony held in Manchester on the occasion of the inaugural British Muslim Awards for 2013 initiated by the Muslim Bank of Britain.

The award is a recognition of Ms. Al-Kaylani's voluntary work extending over 28 years in promoting the role of women and creating cross cultural understanding and dialogue in the UK, the Arab world and internationally.

The event also honored the success and achievements of other British Muslim individuals, groups, and business people, and highlighted the significant role Muslims play in contributing to a better Great Britain.

In addition to many prestigious and honoring positions that Ms. Al-Kaylani holds, she is a board member at the [Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World](#) at the Lebanese American University.

### Ms. Magda El-Sanousi: Arab Women of the Year 2012

Magda El-Sanousi, Oxfam Country Director in Lebanon, has been awarded by Takreem the "Arab Women of the Year 2012". Ms. El-Sanousi, who is a gender and development expert, manages the Arab Region Gender Equality program that covers Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Yemen.

Ms. El-Sanousi strongly believes that women in the Arab region share the same issues, and if given the opportunities to explore and expand their potential, they are a driving force for positive change. She considers networking and coalition building as key factors in empowering women to achieve positive change regarding issues that directly affect their lives.

El-Sanousi devoted the last 20 years to developing programmes and mobilizing resources to empower women. During this time she has lobbied key institutions and governments about the importance of inclusive development that incorporates women's strategic and practical needs. She has worked on promoting gender sensitive budgets and policies in Yemen; on advocating policy change in Iraq to give widows access pensions, and on empowering women in remote villages in Egypt to vote and even stand as candidates in the parliamentary elections. Currently, El-Sanousi is lobbying to include men in gender programming. She believes that unless male attitudes towards women change there will be few opportunities for inclusive social change.

### No Excuse for Legislators (from p.6)

as well as members of governmental and non-governmental organizations, etc...

**Finally:** There is no excuse for legislators who ignore the reality when it comes to enacting a law that aims at protecting domestically abused women. All MPs will be held accountable to women if they fail to assume their responsibilities. "Now, now, and not tomorrow", because "Women's safety is more important than their parliamentary seats" as chanted the demonstrators during the recent street protest\* that asked for placing the proposed bill that protects women from domestic violence on the agenda of the parliament during its upcoming general assembly session. A simple reminder to MPs is in order: A true support of women's cause in their fight for combating violence and discrimination is the best guarantee for a candidate, male or female, to win women's votes in the upcoming parliamentary elections!

Azza Charara Baydoun

\*"Kafa Enough Violence and Exploitation" and the "National Alliance for Legislating the Protection of Women from Family Violence" called for a demonstration Sunday, February 24, 2013, in Beirut.

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