

For activists and academics—and everyone in between

Who said this?

“All that happened and still happens in Lebanon will not deter us from our commitment to human rights and to its top priority, gender equality. And nothing will stand against our determination to contribute as citizens, men and women, in rebuilding our institutions and ourselves”.
(c.f. *Nisa' fi imra'a: Sirat Laure Mughaizel* by Iman Shams Shuqair, 2002, 87).



Laure Mughaizel

“Varying Perceptions, One Outcome”

Field study monitoring the attitudes
and perceptions of women and men towards
women's rights in Lebanon

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Opportunities

Call for Papers

The editorial committee of *Al-Raida* invites submissions to a non-thematic, double-blind, peer reviewed issue.

For more information kindly contact al-raida: al-raida@lau.edu.lb

Postdoctoral Fellow in Classical Islamic Traditions

The Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara seeks to appoint a Faculty Fellow in Islamic Studies.

The Committee will begin reviewing applications on May 23, 2014.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

Save the Date

**Arab Film Festival Texas 2014
May 2, 3 & 4, 2014.**

[Click here](#) to learn more about the event.

Tunisia's Road to Democracy Valentine M. Moghadam

Tunisia launched the Arab Spring in January 2011, and of all the countries affected by the uprisings, it is the only one proceeding relatively smoothly on its democratic transition and toward what political scientists call a democratic consolidation. There are many reasons for Tunisia's advantage, but a vibrant civil society is a key factor. The large, left-leaning trade union UGTT, human rights organizations, the left-wing student organization

UGET, numerous secular and liberal professional associations, and at least two very well-established feminist organizations are features of Tunisia's civil society. These groups predate the Dignity Revolution and thus have developed the civic skills and wider legitimacy needed to help build what I call a women-friendly social democracy.

The Tunisian constitution was adopted by the National Constituent

Assembly in late January 2014 to much acclaim within Tunisia and outside it. Most of the principles are laid out in Chapter 2 of the constitution, entitled “Rights and Liberties”. They show the influence of feminists and the labor movement and reflect the popular demands of the Dignity Revolution for social rights and economic citizenship:

-Articles 35, 36, and 37 guarantee the right to form political parties, unions, and associations. The right

to form trade unions is guaranteed along with the right to strike, except for the army and security services.

-Article 38: “Health is a right for every person” and the State shall “guarantee preventative health care and treatment for every citizen and provide the means necessary to ensure the safety and good quality of health services”. The constitution promises “free health care for those without support and those with limited income”.

-Article 40: “Work is a right for every citizen, male and female. The State shall take the necessary measures to guarantee work on the basis of competence and fairness. All citizens, male and female, shall have the right to decent working conditions and to a fair wage”.

-Article 46: “The State shall commit to protecting women’s achieved rights and seek to support and develop them. ... The State shall guarantee equal opportunities between men and women in the bearing of all the various responsibilities in all fields. ... The State shall take the necessary measure to eliminate violence against women”.

Article 6 is very important and balances respect for religion, moderation and tolerance, and the banning of religious violence or

hate speech. “The State is the guardian of religion. It guarantees freedom of conscience and belief, the free exercise of religious practices and the neutrality of mosques and places of worship from all partisan instrumentalization”. The Tunisian constitution has no reference to the Islamic *Shari’a* – unlike the Egyptian constitution – and explicitly bans the issuance of *Takfir*.

I visited Tunisia for the World Social Forum in March 2013, which took place at the University of Tunis, El Manar. Women and women’s rights workshops were everywhere at the Forum, and at the front of a women’s rights procession that marched through the city center was the widow of the slain left-wing political figure Chokri Belaid. The Belaid assassination and that of another left-wing personage, widely believed to be the work of Islamist radicals, led to the loss of confidence in the Ennahda-dominated coalition government (known as the “troika”), renewed street protests, and eventually an agreement by the government to step down and hand power to a caretaker government that would preside over elections in Fall 2014. The government stepped down in January, and the constitution was finalized and adopted that same month.

Tunisia may be unique in the Middle East and North Africa region in that

women’s rights are firmly entrenched in the political culture and women’s rights groups are well-organized, vigilant, and connected to other civil society organizations and progressive political parties. As such, they can mobilize very effectively against any attempts by conservative forces to undo the gains of the past or to compromise women’s rights through new language (e.g., the 2013 constitutional debate on “complementarity” vs. “equality”). This sentiment and commitment was seen at rallies, marches, and demonstrations, where women of various ages were seen holding placards reading “Ne touche pas à mes acquis” (do not touch my achievements, referring to the 1956 Personal Status Code and subsequent rights). Article 46 mentioned above confirms that the achievements of the past will remain in place.

I visited Tunis again in early March 2014 to conduct a survey, a focus group interview, and interviews with individual activists and political leaders. Tunisians’ self-characterization as a tolerant “arabomusulman” culture is practically a mantra. As many of my interviewees declared, “We are Muslims but we are not Islamists”. This identity – and the influence of progressive civil society groups and political parties – helps explain the tendency toward

pragmatism and compromise on the part of the main Islamic party, Ennahda, and its leadership, although many progressives, including feminists, remain suspicious of Ennahda's objectives. Today, the secular political forces are working overtime to maintain a large electoral coalition that will prevent another Ennahda victory (whether as majority or plurality).

A trade unionist who is also a women's rights activist told me: "We are very happy with the equality article in the constitution. But where are we after the constitution? We still have lots to do, with laws and so forth, and anyway Ennahda is still here. So I can't celebrate yet." A well-known scholar-activist and law professor who was part of the council of experts for the Constituent Assembly said: "This has been a victory. It's not the constitution of the Islamists but of civil society". Still, she remained concerned about Article 7 regarding the state's support for the family and insisted that women's equality would come about only through the harmonization of domestic laws with the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), notably the issue of equality in inheritance.

When I visited the Tunis office of [l'Association des Femmes Tunisiennes pour la Recherche sur le Développement](#) (AFTURD), I was struck by the many posters, flyers, and leaflets associated with numerous rallies, marches, and demonstrations. AFTURD also produces books and pamphlets in Arabic and French. The language of women's rights in the various AFTURD publications – as well as those by the [Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates](#) – is assertive and uncompromising. Both feminist associations are committed to ensuring women's full citizenship and I was pleased to learn that this includes socio-economic rights as well as civil and political rights for women. Tunisia remains a test case of the prospects for a women-friendly democratic transition after the Arab Spring, and the evidence thus far is promising.

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NGO Highlight

Karama

Karama is a regional NGO established in 2005. It functions through an office based in Cairo and another one in Amman. Karama aims to support women leaders on the regional as well as international level. It also acts as a catalyst to end violence against women in the Middle East and North Africa by developing the capacity of key civil society groups.

[Click here](#) to know more about **Karama**

Want to Share your Thoughts & News?

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We are interested in articles, announcements, conference reports, workshop updates, film-screenings, and social initiatives related to women and gender issues in the Middle East, North Africa and beyond.

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“Women’s work in the economic sphere, and their assumption of productive gender roles came as an economic necessity rather than the outcome of developing relations between the two genders, their liberation and equality”. This is one of the major outputs of a study conducted by ABAAD and World Vision and launched in April 2014. The study focused on five major aspects of women’s human rights. They include gender equality issues, violence against women and its forms, respecting women and their will within marriage (marital rape), gender equality in citizenship rights and the rights of elderly women to own property. It was also designed to survey women and men awareness of these rights mainly within the household.

On the different forms of violence against women, the surveyed men and women believed that the study showed that “early marriages together with prevalent security and social tensions, aggravate economic conditions of many families, and exert pressure on women to bear alone the traditional

responsibilities of their families, in addition to their duties at work and exterior burdens. All these factors may lead to domestic violence and disputes, which may end in divorce.

As for marital rape and respecting the wife’s will and desire for sexual intercourse, the study showed that what a woman considers as rape and force, based on women’s freedom and rights, was disregarded by husbands. Participants in the study considered that, in case of marital rape, the law aligned itself with the man, and women are prevented from filing a suit since sexual intercourse is the husband’s natural rights.

On the fourth matter considering *citizenship rights*, particularly a mother’s right to grant the Lebanese citizenship to her children, the survey revealed that those who were deprived of this right are not well-informed, are not aware of consequences, and therefore do not fight for it.

The study calls for an intervention plan through meaningful, variable projects to support family stability, empowerment and rehabilitation of

women, such as providing draft laws that resolve the inequality in family relationships. The study also emphasizes the necessity of establishing organizational and administrative frameworks responsible for implementing the plan, carrying out field studies to develop intervention plans, and benefitting from existing institutions, authorities and facilities and from their programs in order to refer cases which could profit from their services. It also calls for developing and setting up social work leaderships at the national level to stimulate action and take the initiative to achieve the desired goals.

The full Arabic version of the study can be accessed through the following link:

<http://abaadmena.org/userfiles/file/Resources/VPOO.pdf>

Executive Summary in English can be accessed through this link:

http://abaadmena.org/userfiles/file/Resources/VPOO_ExecSummary.pdf

The media campaign on ending VAW can be accessed on the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEmW8p5RkM>

“Love Matters” talks about love and sex in Arabic



For the first time in the Arab world, young people seeking reliable and scientific information on sexual health can now consult a new comprehensive website called ‘Love Matters’ [al-hob thaqafa]. The Arabic language website was launched on March 5, 2014 in Cairo, Egypt, and has been well-received by the media and by organizations working in the field of sexual and reproductive health among young people.

‘Love Matters’, is an innovative multimedia platform engaging young people in conversations about love, sex, and relationships. During its official launch, ‘Love Matters’ hosted a live panel discussion at The Netherlands-Flemish Institute, and brought together participants from the fields of sexual health, development, and the media, to address topics relating to sexual education for youth in Egypt.

Among the speakers at the event was the famous Egyptian actor and activist Khaled Abol Naga, who expressed his satisfaction adding: “There are three taboos in Egypt: politics, religion, and sex. The Egyptians were able to break the first two and I’m positive that the people in the street will break the third taboo soon”.

After being online for only two months, ‘Love Matters’ has already attracted more than 50,000 unique visitors a month. Next to the easy-to-access recourses, the website provides its users with new articles and personal stories on reproductive health every day.

The website is proudly named Culture of Love, with the Arabic word for culture ‘thaqafa’ also referring to knowledge: the information you need to acquire a healthier relationship with your partner. The initiative prides itself on presenting the topics in an inclusive, open, and honest language, and discussing controversial issues openly and respectfully.



From left: Marwa Mamoon (Love Matters Arabic social media coordinator), Khaled Abol Naga (Egyptian actor and activist), Dalia Abdelhamid (The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights), Ahmad Awadallah (activist at Y-Peer Egypt)

The website also utilizes the social media platforms [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#), offering young people the chance to discuss all topics related to love, sex, and relationships in the safety of virtual space.

‘Love Matters’ is part of an ongoing global Love Matters project available in five languages around the world, produced by Radio Netherlands Worldwide. A short video about the launching can be accessed at the following link: <http://lmarabic.com/news/video-launching-love-matters-cairo>

***For more information about the website and the project you can contact Love Matters coordinator in Egypt Abir Sarras: abir.sarras@rnw.org / tel. 00 31 (0)35 672 4278.**



It's your Right to Run, Run for your Right!

For the second consecutive year, the Lebanese American University (LAU) is participating in the Women's Race organized by the Beirut Marathon Association under the auspices of the Lebanese First Lady, Mrs. Wafaa Sleiman, on May 4, 2014.

This year, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) in partnership with the Outreach and Civic Engagement (OCE) at LAU and the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) are participating in support of the **National Campaign to Protect Girls from Early Marriage**.

WHO IS SHE? Profiling: Laure Mughaizel



Aware of the importance of women's role in active political life and nation-building, Lebanese attorney and pioneer Laure Mughaizel (1923-1997) fought legal illiteracy among Lebanese women. Lebanese women are grateful for the laws that Mughaizel removed, reformulated or instituted in the interest of women's rights (Linda Mattar, personal interview, 2001). She was awarded the highly recognized national prize of the Order of the Cedar (Commander), a medal in recognition of her many years of social and public service.

She was a member of "The Democratic Party", founded by the "Lebanese Association of Human Rights" and contributed with other pioneering women in founding "The Lebanese Council of Women" in 1952 (al-Majlis al-nissa'i al-lubnani); she was its legal adviser and one of its policy-makers.

Mughaizel also founded the "Lebanese Association of Women Lawyers" and co-founded the "Lebanese Association of Women Researchers" (Bahithat), a group of women academics who advance research by women. Bahithat focuses on scholarship related to women in Lebanon and the region.

Mughaizel was active in many local, regional, and international non-governmental organizations. She held office as deputy for the president of the Lebanese Council of Women (1959), deputy for the president of the Arab Women's Union (1960) and deputy for the president of the International Council of Women (1966).

She succeeded as a lawyer in changing laws that worked against the interests of women as citizens. Through her clever legal expertise, she enforced the elimination of laws that were discriminatory against women. Her achievements include winning suffrage (1953), woman's right to choose her citizenship (1960), woman's right to travel without the permission of her husband (1974), Lebanon's commitment to the International Declaration of Human Rights (1990), woman's eligibility to act as witness in real estate offices (1993), woman's right to trade without the permission of her husband (1994), and the signing of the CEDAW treaty (1996).

Laure Mughaizel's publications in Arabic included: *al-Mar'a fi-l tashri' al-lubnani*, 1985 (*Woman in the Lebanese Legal System*); Guides for women such as: *Huquki fi-l 'amal*, 1994 (*My Rights in Labour*); *Nahnu muwatinun*, 1996 (*We Are Citizens*); and *Huquq al-mar'a al-insan fi daw' ittifaqiyat al-qada' 'ala jami' ashkal al-tamyiz did al-mar'a*, 1997 (*Women's Rights in Light of the CEDAW treaty, 1997*).

Dr. Hosn Abboud
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MIDDLE EAST/SOUTH ASIA STUDIES

Arab Studies Conference

ARC, Ballroom A

Friday May 2nd***Subjectivity and its Discontents***

- 8:30-9am Registration & Refreshments
9-9:15 Welcome Dean George R. Mangun, Dr. Baki Tezcan, Director ME/SA
- Panel 1
9:15-10am Chair: Sudipta Sen
Islah Jad, Birzeit University
"The Politics of Group Weddings in Palestine: Political and Gender Tensions"
- 10-10:45am Madeline Otis Campbell, Roger Williams University
"Military Interpreters in the Iraq War: On Subject Formation in Translation"
- 10:45-11am Break Refreshments
Panel 2
11-11:45am Chair: Smriti Srinivas
Lena Meari, Birzeit University
"Sumud: A challenge to Sexual Colonial Power Techniques in Colonized Palestine"
- 11:45-12:30am Sherine Hafez, University of California, Riverside
"Rethinking Subjectivity: Interrogating Authenticity and Consistency in Emergent Muslim Subjectivities"
- 12:30-1:30pm Lunch
Panel 3
1:30-2:15pm Chair: Madhavi Sunder
Marcia Inhorn, Yale University
"Emergent Masculinities and Infertile Subjectivities in the Arab World"
- 2:15-3pm Zeina Zaatari, University of California, Davis
"Queer Subjectivities in Lebanon: Interrupted Heteronormativity?"
- 3-3:15pm Break Refreshments
Panel 4
3:15-4pm Chair: Parama Roy
Nadine Naber, University of Illinois, Chicago
"Inscriptions of Empire: Gender and Subjectivity among Arab American Youth"
- 4-4:30pm Suad Joseph
"Thoughts on Subjectivity and its Discontents"
- Panel 5
4:30-5:15pm Chair: Baki Tezcan, Director, ME/SA UC Davis
Reflections on Suad Joseph's Scholarship and Career
Sondra Hale, University of California, Los Angeles
Nancy Gallagher, University of California, Santa Barbara
- 5:15-6:30pm Break
6:30pm Dinner at Conference, ARC, Ballroom A

Saturday May 3rd***Decolonization and its Discontents***

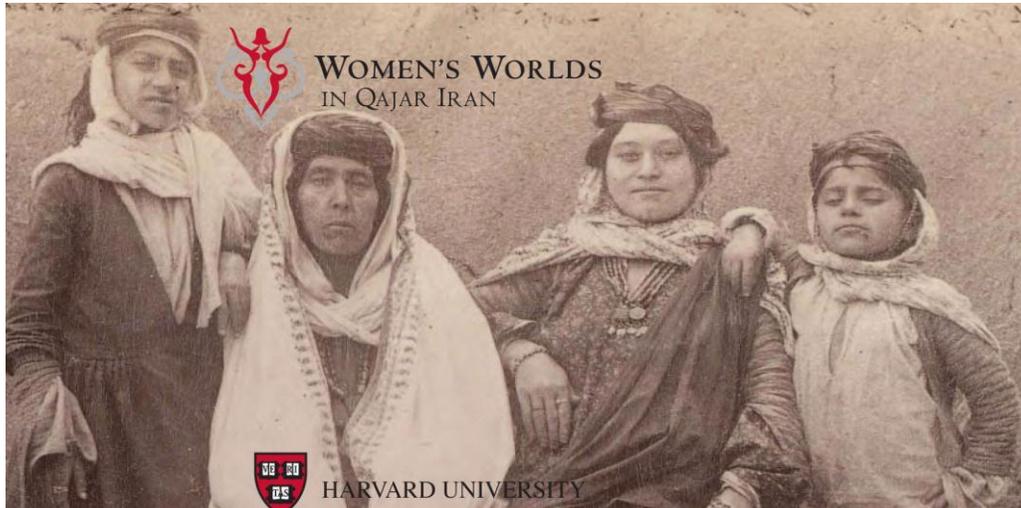
- Panel 1
9:15-10am Chair: Ali Anooshahr
Ussama Makdisi, Rice University
"The Sectarianism of Coexistence: Mythologizing Religion in the Late Ottoman/ Modern Arab World"
- 10:00-10:15am Break Refreshments
Panel 2
10:15-11:00am Chair: Noha Radwan
Ilana Feldman, George Washington University
"Disrupting the Aid Paradigm: Palestinian Experiments in Decolonization"
- 11:00-11:45am Nancy Reynolds, Washington University in St. Louis
"Egypt's 'Search for Dignity': Decolonization and the Aswan High Dam"
- 11:45-12:30pm Yoav Di-Capua, University of Texas at Austin
"Transnational Arab Thought and The Global Culture of Decolonization"
- 12:30-1:30pm Lunch
Panel 3
1:30-2:15pm Chair: Stefania Pandolfo
Samera Esmeir, University of California, Berkeley
"In the Reign of the International: Decolonization between War and Revolution"
- 2:15-3pm Sara Pursley, International Journal of Middle East Studies
"Rending the Veils of Time and Space: Sexual Desire, Decolonization, and Pedagogies of the Unconscious in the Writings of 'Ali al-Wardi"
- 3-3:15pm Break Refreshments
Panel 4
3:15-4pm Chair: Jocelyn Sharlet
Paul Silverstein, Reed College
"The Politics of Indigeneity in North Africa: Decolonization and Postcolonial Recuperations"
- 4-4:45pm Elliott Colla, Georgetown University
"Memories of a Revolution: Recent Memoir Writing in Egypt"
- Panel 5
4:45-5:15pm Chair: Magid Shihade
Joel Beinin
"Comments on Decolonization and Its Discontents"

This conference was made possible through the generous donations to the Middle East/ South Asia Studies Program

by Faris Saeed.

For more information check the following link:

<http://mesa.ucdavis.edu/events/arab-studies-conference>



[Women's Worlds in Qajar Iran](#) (WWQI), is pleased to introduce its new feature -- [an interactive Collaborative Learning and Research Platform](#). This platform enables researchers to collaborate with each other and contribute to scholarship. Its features can be used for teaching purposes as well.

The Platform offers three distinct threads: Questions and Discussions, Research-in-Progress, and Contributions. All these features can easily link to and draw items from the main archival site. Modifications of the main site now enable users to go from any item display page to the Platform.

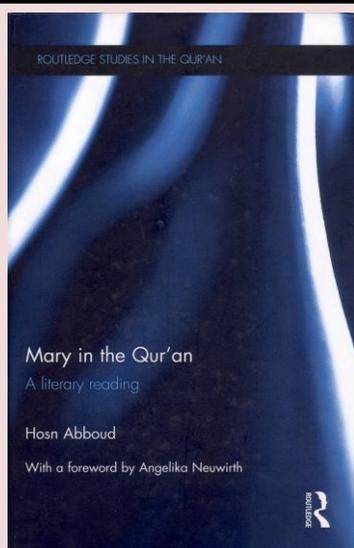
Users can post questions, comment on items, or respond to others' questions and comments in [Questions and Discussions](#).

[Research-in-Progress](#) offers a space for interactive collaboration, including posting one's research ideas and drafts, with the option of sharing such work with selected collaborators only. The rich visual resources of WWQI archive could bring into these collaborations students and scholars of art history beyond Iranian studies community to analyze particular art objects, photographs, or manuscript illuminations for artistic detail, and engage in comparative cultural analysis.

The [Contributions](#) thread has further subdivisions: Transcribe a document, Translate a document, Write a biography, and Submit a correction. Teachers and students of the Persian language, for instance, can form learning circles in a class and use textual material or audio files from the archive for transcription or translation assignments. History teachers could use the audio files for critical methods assignments in Oral History projects. The Transcription facility could further be used by history teachers to train students to read pre-type-set handwriting. The Writing biography feature could be used for class assignments in language and history classes.

Development of this Platform was made possible in part through a grant by Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute.

Highlights



Mary in the Qur'an: A Literary Reading

Author: Hosn Abboud
Publisher: Routledge
Year: 2013

Providing an analysis of the complete story of Mary in its liturgical, narrative and rhetorical contexts, this literary reading is a prerequisite to any textual reading of the Qur'an whether juristic, theological, or otherwise.

The Qur'an is an oral event, linguistic phenomenon and great literature. So the application of modern literary theories is essential to have full comprehension of the history of the development of literary forms from pre-Islamic period such as poetry, story telling, speech-giving to the present. In addition, there is a need, from a feminist perspective, to understand in depth why a Christian mother figure such as Mary was important in early Islam and in the different stages of the development of the Qur'an as a communication process between Muhammad and the early Muslim community.

Introducing modern literary theories, gender perspective and feminist criticism into Qur'anic scholarship for the first time, this book will be an invaluable resource for scholars and researchers of Islamic Studies, Qur'anic and New Testament Studies, Comparative Literature and Feminist Theology.

**The book has been initially published in Arabic under the title *Al-Sayyida Maryam fi-l Qur'an al-Karim: Qira'a adabiya* (Dar al-Saqi, 2010).

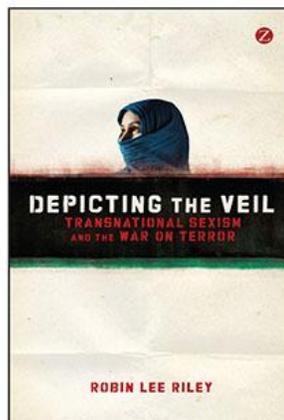


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 This is What Liberation Looks Like

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Depicting the Veil

Transnational Sexism and the War on Terror

Robin Lee Riley

This powerful book exposes how gendered Orientalism is wielded to justify Western imperialism.

Over the last ten years, Western governments and mainstream media have utilized concepts of white masculine supremacy and feminine helplessness, juxtaposed with Orientalist images depicting women of color as mysterious, sinister and dangerous to support war. Oscillating between 'Mrs. Anthrax', female suicide bombers and tragic, helpless victims, representations of 'brown women' have spawned both rescue narratives and terrorist alerts.

Examining media and pop culture from *Sex and the City 2* to *Vanity Fair* and *Time Magazine*, Robin Riley uses transnational feminist analysis to reveal how this kind of transnational sexism towards Muslim women in general and Afghan and Iraqi women in particular has led to a new form of gender imperialism.

To contribute announcements or articles to this newsletter or to subscribe, please email: amewsbulletin@gmail.com

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معهد الدراسات النسائية في العالم العربي

