

Egypt hands down death sentence for priest's murder

Author:

AFP

ID:

1652898366823652200

Wed, 2022-05-18 21:31

CAIRO: An Egyptian court on Wednesday sentenced to death a man accused of the murder last month of a Coptic priest in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, judicial sources said.

The Alexandria court's ruling is subject to approval by the mufti of the republic.

The sources said the defendant was found guilty of voluntary homicide after a court-ordered psychological assessment found him "responsible for his actions."

Father Arsanios Wadid died of his wounds in hospital after being stabbed on April 7 on Alexandria's seafront promenade as he accompanied a group of young parishioners.

The assailant was grabbed by passers-by and handed over to police, who detained him in a psychiatric hospital because of doubts over his mental health.

Coptic Christians, the largest non-Muslim religious minority in the Middle East, make up roughly 10 to 15 percent of Egypt's predominantly Sunni Muslim population of more than 100 million.

The community has long complained of discrimination and underrepresentation. In February, however, Egypt for the first time swore in a Coptic judge to head its constitutional court.

Copts were targeted in a series of sectarian attacks after the military in 2013 deposed Islamist president Muhammad Mursi. Such attacks focused largely on remote villages in southern Egypt.



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Egypt refers man accused of killing Coptic priest to trial
Egypt's Coptic Church mourns death of former patriarch

[Lebanon reformists weigh choices after election surge](#)

Author:

Wed, 2022-05-18 21:12

BEIRUT: Newly elected reformist MPs in Lebanon are planning strategies following election breakthroughs that grant them significant sway in the parliamentary balance of power.

Thirteen reformist MPs in Lebanon who entered the legislative race on the values of the 2019 anti-establishment uprising, as well as 21 independent MPs, have entered the newly elected Lebanese Parliament.

Analysts have added up MPs to figure out the size of the parliamentary blocs, which are divided between sovereign blocs and pro-Hezbollah groupings.

Figures show that elected MPs may be positioned within 13 blocs divided into two opposite larger camps, forming the 128-MP Parliament.

The sovereign MPs can be classified based on their previous positions. A total of 68 MPs are opposed to Hezbollah. They include members from the Lebanese Forces Party, the Progressive Socialist Party, the Islamic Group and the Lebanese Phalanges Party, as well as independents and reformists.

Meanwhile, the pro-Hezbollah camp includes the party itself, the Amal Movement, the Free Patriotic Movement, the Marada Movement, the Tashnaq Party and Al-Ahbash, for a total of about 60 MPs.

There is much speculation about how the new independent MPs will deal with upcoming events, and how they will position themselves on the parliamentary map.

A political observer told Arab News: "We will see the true colors of every MP when topics related to core issues are discussed."

The observer added: "Will these MPs change their stance regarding Hezbollah's illegal weapons, although some have avoided addressing this sensitive issue in the past? Will these MPs be able to form a unified bloc that can influence decisions within Parliament, or will they remain independent, each working alone?"

Suleiman Franjeh, head of the Marada Movement and a candidate for the Presidency, appealed to reformist MPs, saying: "Do not place strict conditions on yourselves so that you do not become isolated, because theory is one thing, and practice is another."

Fouad Siniora, former Lebanon PM, who backed a list in Beirut and whose candidates all failed to reach parliament, said: "Sovereign MPs must develop a correct vision for the future on how to confront Hezbollah's domination and control in order to restore the Lebanese state."

He added: "In 2008, the sovereign forces had won 72 seats in parliament, but Hezbollah at that time refused to form a majority government."

Siniora warned against backing down as the March 14 forces did in 2009, which cost them their power.

A video shared on social media shocked voters in Tripoli and around the country. The elected MP Firas Salloum, who was on the Real Change list with the Islamic Group, was filmed celebrating his victory by dancing to a song supporting the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The video prompted the Islamic Group to issue a statement renouncing Salloum. It said: "He does not represent us as he seemed proud of his affiliation to the criminal tyrant, who blew up the Al-Taqwa and Al-Salam Mosques in Tripoli, and killed our people in Syria."

The statement demanded that Salloum resign "because he does not represent the city and does not resemble its people."

Reformist MP Elias Jarada said: "Taking the revolution from the street to the Parliament necessitates adopting a policy of reaching out to all for dialogue so that the 17 October revolution becomes a model for dynamic political action. It is important to be realistic because parliament includes groups that represent other categories of the Lebanese people."

Several reformist MPs rushed to convene with their groups to determine their next steps in Parliament.

Elected reformist MP Ibrahim Mneimneh, whose list won three parliamentary seats in Beirut's second constituency, said: "The reformist MPs will be the revolutionary voice in parliament. We will not compromise with the criminal regime that destroyed our lives, and we will not compromise in the face of intimidation with weapons, nor over the sale of state assets, the money of depositors, or the path of justice with the Beirut port blast and the explosion in Akkar."

Leaked news suggested that reformist MP Melhem Khalaf, former head of the Beirut Bar Association who took part in protests against state corruption and helped release detained protesters, could possibly be elected deputy parliament speaker, succeeding Elie Ferzli, who has held the position since 2000, but failed to reach Parliament in the recent elections.

Meanwhile, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, who is seeking a new term, is reportedly making efforts to win over civil society, and supports having Khalaf as his deputy.

Major challenges await the newly elected house, the first of which is electing a speaker and a deputy speaker, followed by parliamentary consultations to assign someone to form a new government, then electing a new president in September or October after Michel Aoun's term ends.

There are also significant legislative obligations, within the framework of reforms required by the international community to extricate Lebanon from its worsening economic crisis.



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Reformists surge in Lebanon pollsUN chief calls for 'inclusive government' after Lebanon vote

[Tech booms in the GCC, but women in danger of being excluded](#)

Author:

Tue, 2022-05-17 22:43

DUBAI: Tech is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, and the Arab Gulf is increasingly viewed as one of its global centers. At the heart of the region's tech scene is Dubai, dubbed the "tech hub of the Arab world."

The UAE's commercial capital continued to grow over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, in part, perhaps, because of its decision to keep its borders open while most of the world went into prolonged lockdowns.

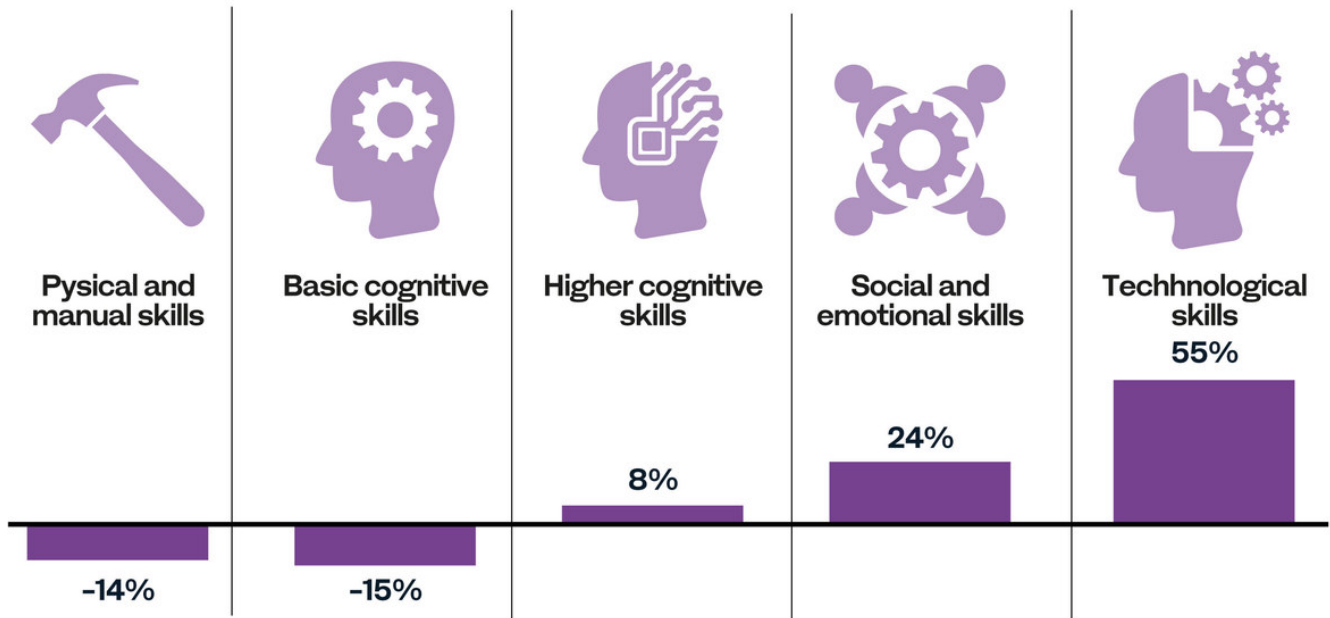
But this continued growth is also the result of the rising number of technology startups drawn to the UAE, Dubai's appeal for entrepreneurs and

its ability to woo international venture capital firms.

According to Dubai-based research platform Wamda, investments in Middle Eastern tech firms, excluding those in Israel, quadrupled to \$2.87 billion last year – with roughly half of that capital flowing into the UAE.

MASSIVE DEMAND FOR TECH SKILLS BY 2030

Change in skills required in Europe and the US from 2016 to 2030



Source: McKinsey Global Institute, May 2018

ARAB NEWS

Dubai is now home to several tech startups worth at least \$1 billion – known in the business community as “unicorns” for their statistical rarity.

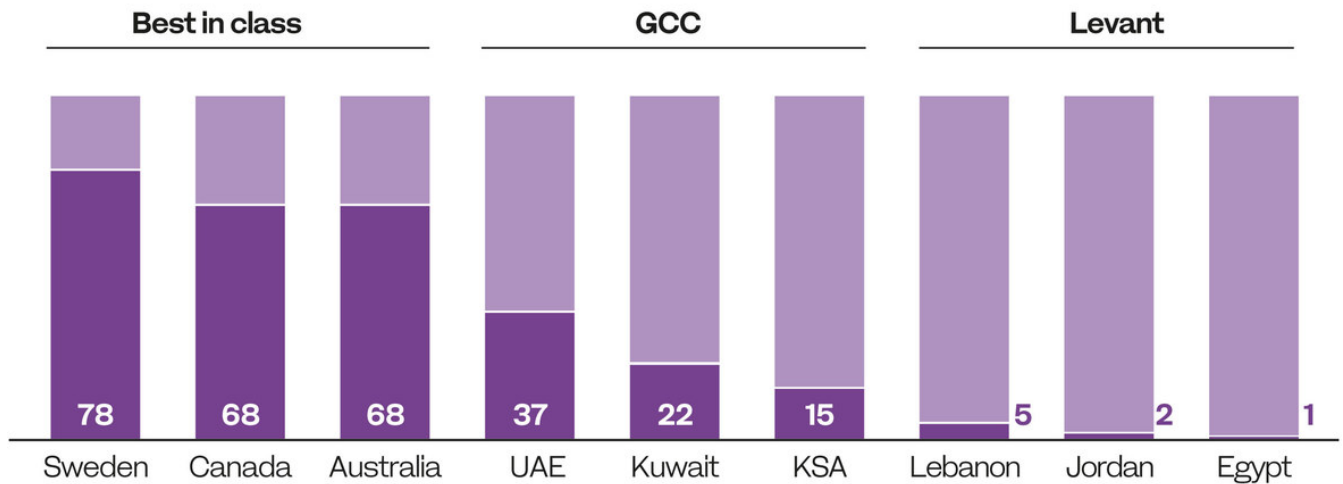
These include Vista Global, a private aviation platform; Kitopi, a cloud kitchen platform; and Emerging Markets Property Group, which manages classified listing websites in Egypt, the UAE and elsewhere.

Yet, despite the burgeoning success of tech startups in the Middle East, Arab women remain poorly represented in the industry.

BENEFITS OF CONNECTIVITY

Internet and smartphone penetration gives GCC an advantage

■ % of women with access to online banking



Source: Global Findex, 2017 / McKinsey

ARAB NEWS

Despite female involvement in the Emirates Mars Mission, which successfully placed a probe in orbit around the red planet in February 2021, “the lack of presence in this region of women in tech is very visible,” Dr. Nour E. Raouafi, a project scientist with NASA’s Parker Solar Probe Mission, told Arab News.

“If you look at some domains, like space where I am working, the participation of women is not at the level where it should be,” Raouafi added, speaking ahead of his appearance on a panel at the Arab Women Forum, which took place in Dubai on May 17.

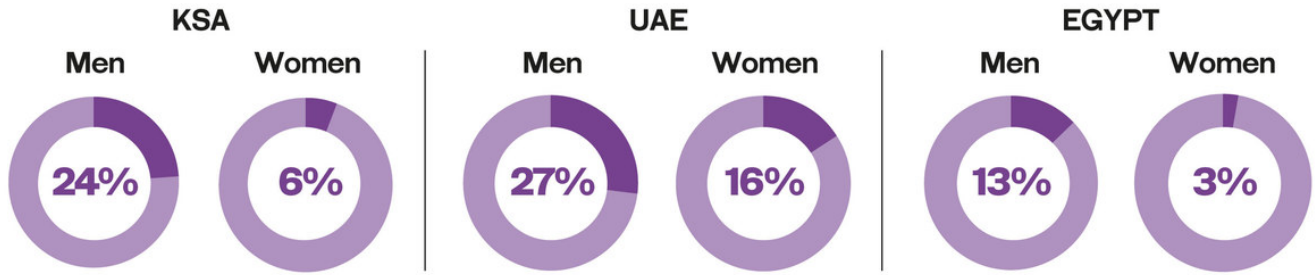
According to Endeavor Insight, Saudi Arabia and the US boast a similar participation rate among women in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, known as STEM, at 28 percent. This is higher than the UK, which has a rate of just 22 percent.

Nevertheless, experts believe there is far more work to be done to encourage more women to pursue degrees and careers in STEM fields, both in the Arab world and globally.

“We should be striving toward equality at all levels – from management downward – and the best way to do this is to start from the grassroots, from colleges and schools, and to encourage young women to work in space and other fields of tech by providing fellowships and other incentives,” said Raouafi

TECHNICAL LIMITATIONS

Fewer women take college courses equipping them for the digital future



Source: UNESCO, 2016 / McKinsey

ARAB NEWS

There are reasons for optimism. Measures designed to enhance the business environment in the Gulf and to eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace are already moving things in the right direction.

“Young professionals, women and men, are now flocking to the Middle East while working for European or US based technology companies,” Philippe Blanchard, founder of Futurous, told Arab News.

“Concrete actions have been taken by the GCC leadership, in support of the IT industry, in setting up an efficient education system, as well as tackling the gender pay gap such as in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.”

However, social perceptions remain an obstacle. “Technology is still considered a man’s world, but there are opportunities to change the mindset,” said Blanchard.

For example, “ensuring the parents, the school teachers and university professors are not pushing specific curriculum based on gender – like nurses for young women and engineers for young men.”





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[Arab women are now ministers and CEOs, yet stereotypes persist](#)

Tue, 2022-05-17 22:50

DUBAI: Outdated and harmful stereotypes of meek and oppressed Arab women still prevail in Western and Asian media.

Despite these faulty notions about who and what they are, Arab women continue to defy expectations and make inroads in the worlds of business, politics, finance, diplomacy and tech.

However, many believe more must still be done to tackle baseless misconceptions about Arab women, their role and their capabilities in the eyes of the outside world.

"We live in a world which has historically looked at our part of the world as a traditional one, where women are more in the family and household," May Nasrallah, founder and executive chairman of deNovo Corporate Advisers, told Arab News.



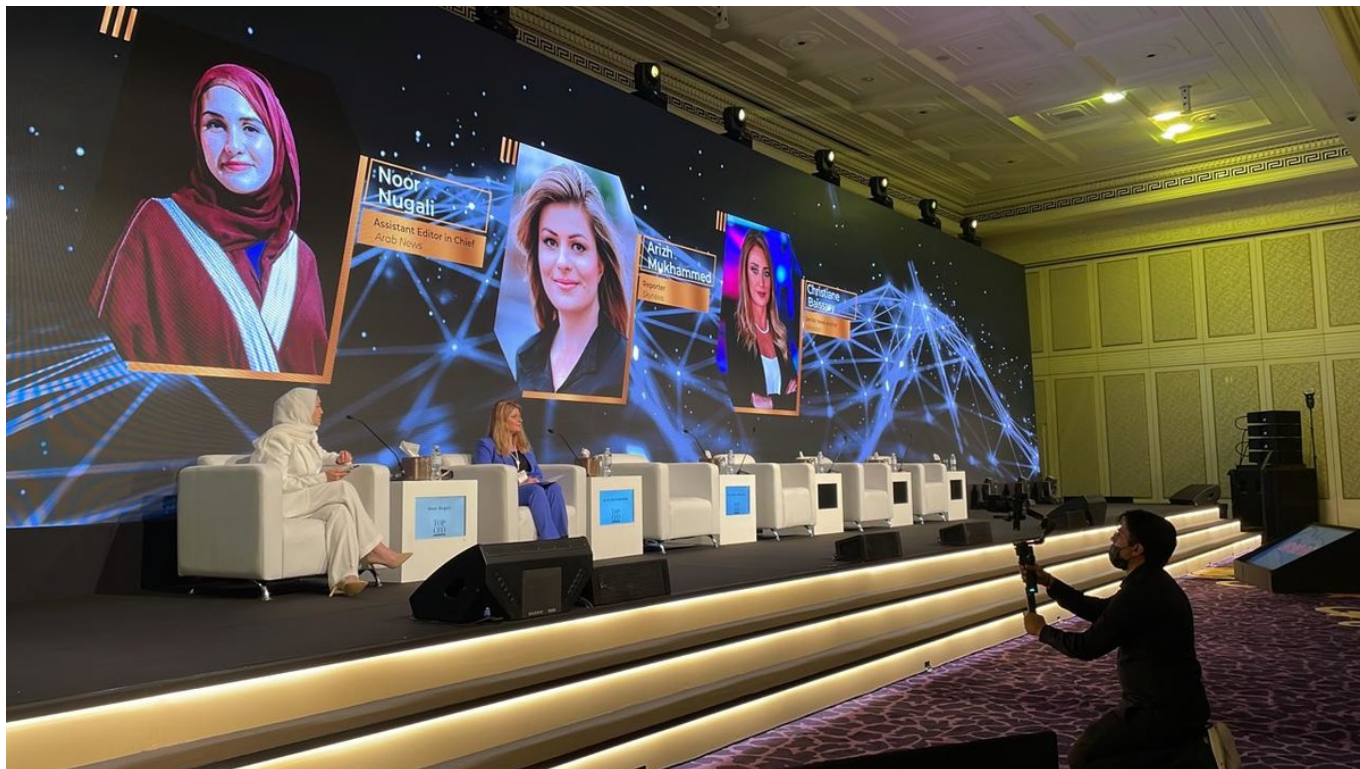
A Saudi woman poses for a photo after having a driving lesson in Jeddah on March 7, 2018. (AFP/File Photo)

"But in reality, we are so far away from that (in terms of) the evolution and how much we've changed in how we operate here. In the UAE, we have women in government, leadership positions, heads of banks, family groups and ministers, so we've changed a lot, but there is a lack of knowledge."

To change the image of the Arab woman abroad, Nasrallah has urged traditional forms of media, such as television broadcasters, to showcase more female Arab leaders.

"We see multiple examples where they are very impressive," she said. "It's about continuing to escalate women to let the world see what they are capable of."

Another potential area of improvement is in challenging gender expectations that persist within some communities.



Nasrallah and Kanoo were part of a discussion panel on “Arab women’s image,” which took place at the Arab Women’s Forum within the Top CEO conference in Dubai on May 17. (AN Photo/Zubiya Shaikh)

“We need our own traditional images to change internally,” Nasrallah said. “It changes with the different generations and we’re getting there. Look at the leadership around us, and who is running our region right now. It is very forward-thinking, very open minded, and it enhances women in leadership positions. It’s been reflected time and again.”

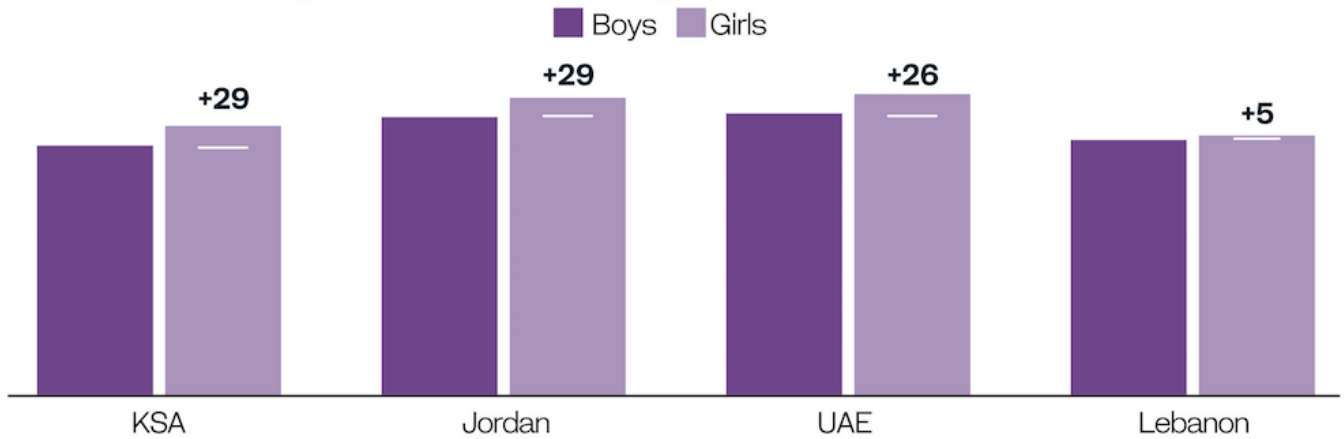
Nasrallah believes self-doubt is another obstacle that needs to be overcome in the mindsets of Arab women. Recalling her own time in investment banking, she remembers male colleagues putting themselves forward for promotions or new roles – whether they were capable of them or not.

“Women, on the other hand, second guess themselves and that’s inherent in our configuration, which needs to be changed,” she said.

A support network at home is also crucial. Nasrallah, who has four sons, said that she drew encouragement from both her father and husband, who pushed her to maintain her full-time career.

GIRLS OUTPERFORMING BOYS IN SCIENCES

Average science achievement by gender in 4 Middle Eastern countries



Source: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study /
International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2015

ARAB NEWS

“Having men around us that encourage us to continue to go forth in the business world or workforce is a huge positive.”

Equally, providing the right tools to be successful and to not be afraid to fail would give more women the mentality required to succeed. Having a supportive network of peers would also provide an important ecosystem that can help support them in entrepreneurship.

For Suzy Kanoo, CEO and president of the Khalil bin Ebrahim Kanoo Company and International Motor Trading Agency in Bahrain, raising awareness about the successes of Arab women is key.

“We talk about how great we are, but women underestimate their strength – it’s unequalled,” she told Arab News.



Saudi entrepreneurs Asmaa Alabdallah (L), founder of BitGo, and Reem Dad (R), co-founder of Taibah VR, stand in front of Halcyon House in Washington. (AFP)

"In my family business, I attend conferences around the Asian continent, and I have noticed they preferred to talk to the male manager, which hit me, and I realized I am blessed to be a part of this region and I am so proud to be an Arab woman."

Kanoo, who wrote a book about empowering Arab women called "Hear Us Speak: Letters from Arab Women," said the West fails fundamentally to understand Arab women and their religion.

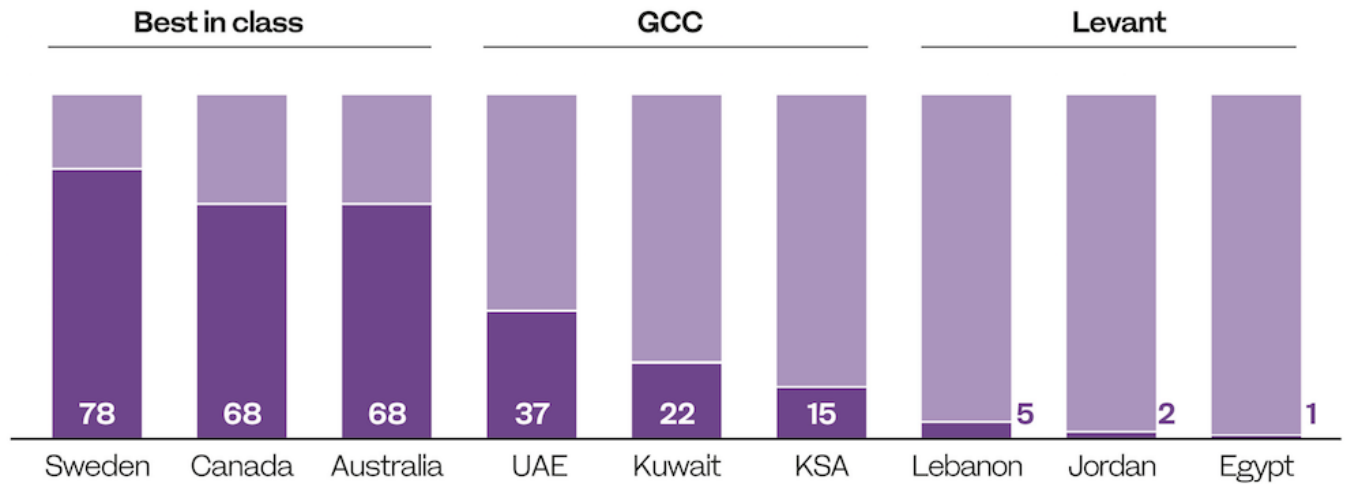
"(For the West), being more modest or wearing a hijab has something to do with a woman being more submissive," she said.

"(For them) it's synonymous with that, but when they come here, they see it's not true at all. This is a choice that everyone has the right to, but I'm respected the same way as someone who wears one and this is the beauty of our region."

BENEFITS OF CONNECTIVITY

Internet and smartphone penetration gives GCC an advantage

■ % of women with access to online banking



Source: Global Findex, 2017 / McKinsey

ARAB NEWS

Making an effort to understand, visit and read more about the region would help eliminate such misconceptions, she believes, as foreigners would come to realize that the ideas they have been fed about the role and status of Arab women is false.

However, Kanoo believes an issue arises when Arab women seek to move up the professional ladder.

"I see that lacking," she said. "We need more action, with more women on board seats. We're just as educated. So, we need an extra push and more affirmative action on that."

She called for more female judges to preside over family courts across the Middle East – a move that would rebalance the mere 8 percent of female judges seen today.



Saudi women jog in the streets of Jeddah's historic Al-Balad district. (AFP)

Arab women must also become more assertive in demanding their rights, taking shame out of the equation, Kanoo added. "Once we stand up and (claim) our rights, that's it, people start to respect that."

Generation Z – those born between the mid to late-1990s and the 2010s – is challenging outdated behaviors thanks to social media and evolving parenting habits. "Social media paved the way and parents are another large influence on that," Kanoo said.

"More than anything, our governments are helping us through the different reforms we are seeing, across Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Nothing is going to hold Gen Z back. We're not there yet, but we're moving forward, which is fantastic."

But continuing to empower Arab women is not just about reputation or doing the right thing – it is also good for the economy, said Nasrallah.

ARAB WOMEN FORUM

SPECIAL ADDRESS: BEYOND THE BUSINESS RESET

Speaker: Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Saudi ambassador to the US

May 17, 2022
Palazzo Versace Dubai, UAE

STORYTELLERS FROM THE WAR FRONT

Speakers: Christiane Baisary, news anchor, Al-Hadath
Arizh Mukhammed, reporter, Sky News
Noor Nugali, assistant editor-in-chief, Arab News

WHEN WOMEN FIGHT BACK

Speakers: Cecilie Fjellhøy, founder, Action Reaction Foundation
Pernilla Sjöholm, Swedish public figure

A NEW BEGINNING: WORK 2.0

Speakers: Christine Harb, Global Brand Council, Visa
Elham Mahfouz, CEO, Commercial Bank of Kuwait
Samia El-Kadiri, adviser and head of research, governance and compliance, Hawkamah
Marketa Simkova, partner, director, People and Change Practice, KPMG
Jean-Pierre Calvez, founder, Novonda

ARAB WOMEN'S IMAGE

Speakers: Huda Lawati, founder and CEO, Aliph Capital
May Nasrallah, founder and executive chair, deNovo Corporate Advisers
Suzy Kanoo, CEO and president, Khalil bin Ibrahim Kanoo Company & International Motor Trading Agency
Khalid Abdulla Janahi, chairman, Vision 3
Matthew Miller, senior managing director, Teneo

IT'S FAKE NEWS

Speakers: Faisal J. Abbas, editor-in-chief, Arab News
Khalid Abdulla Janahi, chairman, Vision 3
Hussein Freijeh, general manager of Snap Inc. for MENA
Thomas Hughes, executive director, Meta Oversight Board

THE MANAGEMENT BOTTLENECKS

Speakers: Dr. Celeste Cecilia Moles Lo Turco, director of government and public sector, PwC Middle East
Iyad Malas, CEO, Al-Ghurair Group
Rabih I. Khoury, managing partner, Middle East Venture Partners
Mike Frayne, CEO, Aviv Clinics Dubai
Cyba Audi, founder and CEO, Saba Consultants
Dr. Yasar Jarrar Author, member of the board of trustees, Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government

THE LEAKING PIPELINE

Speakers: Selim Chidiac, CEO, L'Azurde Company for Jewelry
Jean-Pierre Calvez, founder, Novonda
Amr M. Khashoggi, chairman, Amkest Group
Gretchen Moxcey, head of people, performance and culture, KPMG
Hassan M. Fattah, director of communications, Crescent Petroleum

THE WORKPLACE OF TOMORROW

Speakers: Christine Harb, Global Brand Council, Visa
Dr. Celeste Cecilia Moles Lo Turco, director of government and public sector, PwC Middle East
Khaled Almaeena, chairman, Al-Bilad Media and Publishing, managing partner, Quartz Communications
Dr. Maliha Hashmi, public speaker and author, WEF Global Future Council expert, V2O delegate of G20
Anand Vengurlekar, strategic innovation adviser

WOMEN IN TECH

Speakers: Dr. Nour E. Raouafi, project scientist, NASA Parker Solar Probe mission
Philippe Blanchard, founder, Futurous
Ambareen Musa, founder and CEO, Souqalmal.com
Dr. Selda Konukcu, senior director of global strategic accounts, Honeywell Connected Business

SAUDI WOMEN PIONEERS: CHANGE FROM WITHIN

Speakers: Sarah Al-Tamimi, vice chair, National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, deputy president, Human Rights Commission
Noor Nugali, assistant editor-in-chief, Arab News
Nora Aldabal, executive director for arts and creative industries, Royal Commission for AlUla
Lama Al-Shethry, editor-in-chief, Sayidaty Magazine and Al-Jamila

"A better educated mother will better educate her children and give them opportunities as well, so it's an ecosystem that will benefit to evolve and grow.

"More separation brings you down as a society and we need to be lifting ourselves up and showcasing to the world what we are capable of."

Nasrallah and Kanoo were part of a discussion panel on "Arab women's image," which took place at the Arab Women's Forum within the Top CEO conference in Dubai on May 17.



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[Editor's Choice](#)

Why positive change in Middle East starts with bringing women into the work forceDigital transformation, women participation are the need of the hour, says VP Visa CEMEA

Houthi mines have killed 372 people since mid-2019: Report

Author:

Tue, 2022-05-17 22:09

AL-MUKALLA: Tens of thousands of land mines planted by the Iran-backed Houthis across Yemen have killed 372 people and wounded 754 more since mid-2019, the Yemeni Landmine Monitor said.

The latest victim of unexploded ordnance was a policeman, Mohammed Aklan, who was fatally wounded this week after stepping on a mine outside his home on the outskirts of the western city of Hodeidah, the organization said.

Also this week, a civilian was killed in a mine blast as he was collecting plastic bottles in the eastern section of Hodeidah.

Yemen's Hodeidah province is plagued with undetected land mines. The Houthis planted thousands of mines in the province in 2017 and 2018 to obstruct a military offensive by government troops.

The new statistics on land mine victims in Yemen comes as activists, diplomats, ministers and members of the public in Yemen launched an online campaign to draw attention to the use of land mines by the Houthis, demanding that the militia hand over maps that show the locations of the devices.

Yemenis say that the Houthis have laid mines on roads and around hospitals, schools and farms, and have planted more naval mines in the Red Sea, calling upon the world, mainly international mediators, to order the militia to hand over maps during the UN-brokered truce.

"The colossal number of land mines planted by Houthis in Yemen has been unconscionable and will take years to discover and dismantle. To help deter more innocent people and wildlife from being murdered or maimed, Houthis should immediately #HandInTheMaps so they can be detected," the Yemeni Embassy in Washington, D.C. tweeted.

Muammar Al-Eryani, Yemen's information minister, said that the extensive use of land mines by the militia has turned Yemen into the most mine-saturated area in the world since the Second World War, noting that displaced people cannot return to their homes and farms in liberated areas due to the presence of mines.

"The international community, UN and the UN envoy are required to pressure the Houthi militia to stop manufacturing and planting mines of all kinds, provide maps of minefields, support government demining programs, rehabilitate the injured and reintegrate them into society," Al-Eryani tweeted.

Brig. Gen. Mohammed Al-Kumaim, a Yemeni military analyst, told Arab News that it is unlikely the Houthis will respond positively to the campaign, and will

continue their mine program. "When tens of land mines are removed from a location during the day, the Houthis sneak into the same place to plant them again. Those maps should be taken from the Houthis by force," he said.



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Silent Taiz protest denounces deadly strikes by HouthisHouthis using summer camps to train child soldiers, parents warned