

NewsBriefs

Laws regarding women's rights that have been amended in the Lebanese Legislation

- 1953. The right to vote.
- 1959. Equality in inheritance.
- 1960. The right to choose one's nationality upon marriage.
- 1974. Freedom of movement.
- 1983. Elimination of the penal code attached to use of birth control.
- 1994. The Laws of Medical Ethics on Therapeutic Abortion stipulate strict penalties against the doctor and the patient performing an abortion. The legal exception applies only when the life of the mother is in danger.
- 1994. A woman's legal and public testimony is considered equal to the man's (previously the testimony of a woman was equated with half the man's thus requiring the testimony of two women vis-a-vis one man).
- 1994. The Lebanese Cabinet canceled articles 11, 12, 13, 14, of commercial laws stipulating a married woman's need for her husband's permission to have a business endeavor (article 11). The husband is not bound to this permission and may reverse it. However, according to article 12 he must offer just reasons for this reversal and the wife has the right to request their evaluation by the court (article 12). A woman is legally allowed to carry on the necessary tasks in managing her business once she has received permission from her husband (article 13). The law also stipulates that a woman engaging in business must receive her husband's permission even if the personal status code pertaining to her religion does not stipulate this requirement (article 14).
However, the husband reserves the right to protest.

Kuwait ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in a Royal decree but the Cabinet held reservations over some articles:

Article 7(a) stipulating the elimination of discrimination against women in the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies.

Article 9(2) stipulating that State Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

Article 16(f) which stipulates the same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship, and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount.

Kuwait declared that it will not be committed to report, to the International Court, any discrepancies or conflicts that may arouse from the understanding or implementation of the convention.

Our source: the newsletter of the Awal Women Society and the Association for the Advancement of Bahraini Young Women (established in 1955).
The Bahrain Young Ladies Association can be reached at:
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The number of women who are parliament deputies in the world has decreased according to 1993 statistics compiled by the Inter-national Parliamentary Association.

Women occupy an average of 10.1 percent of parliamentary seats, compared to a recorded average 14.6 percent in 1988. There are 35,884 deputies in the world of which 2,626 are women. In the Island of Seashell in Finland, the women-to-men ratio in parliament is almost equal with women averaging 45.8 percent in 1993. Finland is followed by Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Iceland, Cuba, Austria and China where they form 21 percent of parliament. There are 11 countries who do not have women deputies in their parliaments.

Our source: the newsletter of the Awal Women Society and the Bahrain Young Ladies Association.

AWARD

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, April 3, 1994. **Wadad El-Qadi, Ph.D., was awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Literature.** Wadad El-Qadi was honored for her outstanding academic and literary achievements in the study of Arabic and Islamic literature. She is professor of Arabic Language and Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago as well as the Director of the Department of Semitic Languages. Her achievements include teaching positions at The American University of Beirut, Harvard, Columbia and Yale Universities. She is member of a number of international academic associations.