

FROM LEBANON

UN Launched a Program for Institutionalization of a Women's Machinery

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has established a program in conjunction with the National Committee for Women's Affairs to promote the role of women in Lebanon. The UNDP will work with civil organizations as well as ministries to push for equality among the sexes, and include the progress of women within the national development program.

(The Daily Star, June 21, 1997)

Women in Politics

Lebanese MP, Nayla Mouawad, launched a campaign to promote women's participation in politics stressing that the issue affects civil society as a whole. The campaign, which includes surveys and studies of Lebanese opinions and obstacles against the promotion of women in politics, is to be implemented by the Renée Mouawad foundation (a local foundation) and the Spanish Fundacion Promocion Social de la Cultura (the foundation for the social promotion of culture), funded by the European Union. The findings of the campaign will be announced at the end of the first three-month phase. During the second three-month phase, the organizations will produce a practical guide for women who plan to venture into politics.

(The Daily Star, June 5, 1997)

FROM EGYPT

Women Victims in Egypt

Amnesty International sent an alert reporting that Egyptian security forces have detained and tortured dozens of women, in most - but not all - cases solely because of their marital or other familial relationship to men who are active in extremist religious Right ("fundamentalists") groups.

The organization called upon the Egyptian Government to:

- immediately release all those who are at present in detention under the Emergency Law for whom release orders have been issued by the courts;
- introduce immediate and effective measures to ensure that female detainees are protected from all forms of torture and ill-treatment, including sexual abuse and harassment;
- publicly emphasize that torture and ill-treatment, including threats of rape and sexual abuse, by government agents are grave and intolerable human rights violations, and that anyone who commits such violations will be promptly brought to justice;
- ensure that statements or confessions extracted from detainees as a result of torture or ill-treatment - including rape

and sexual abuse or threats of such treatment - must never be admitted in legal proceedings against them;

- set up prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into all reports of torture and make the methods and findings of these investigations public within reasonable time;

- provide fair and adequate compensation and rehabilitation for all victims of torture;

- ensure that any members of the security or other forces involved in torture and ill-treatment of detainees, including female detainees, be brought to justice;

- ensure that female staff be present at all times during interrogation of female detainees and prisoners and be solely responsible for any body searches which should not be carried out in any manner that constitutes cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

- ensure that individuals are able to lodge official complaints on human rights violations and to contact national or international human rights groups without fear of reprisal, harassment or intimidation.

FROM TURKEY

International Kurdish Women Studies Network

An International Kurdish Women Studies Network is in the process of being established with the goal of promoting the study of Kurdish women from diverse disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. As a first step, the Network is planning to hold conferences and workshops, build an archive and a library, and compile a bibliography.

Those interested in gender studies of Kurdish society, activists in the women's movement, or those who want to contribute to the project may join by sending a concise CV (including areas of research interest, languages used, and address) to: Shahrazad Mojab, Department of Adult Education, OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto ON M5S 1V6 Canada (416-923-6641, ext. 2242; smojab@oise.utoronto.ca).

FROM NIGERIA

Arresting a Journalist

On March 20, 1997, Ladi Olorunyomi, a journalist who has worked for the "Concord" and the "Herald" newspapers, was arrested at 8:00 p.m. at the family's residence in the Palm Avenue neighborhood of Lagos. Four agents from the directorate of military intelligence and one female army officer searched the residence but did not remove anything from the premises. They then transported Olorunyomi to Apapa, a military intelligence holding facility where she was detained. The military intelligence agents gave no reason for the arrest and did not present a warrant. Ladi Olorunyomi's mother and sister have tried to visit her, but were denied access.