

# Women's Year ... Is Not Finished Yet



## 2017 Annual Report on

## The Egyptian Women's Status



# Summary of the 2017 Egyptian Women's Status Report

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## Introduction:

The President Abdel Fattah Al- Sisi declared 2017 a "Year of the Egyptian Woman" because of the pivotal role of women in the Society. This has entailed some presidential decisions in favor of women, such as the President has assigned the government to allow 250 million Egyptian pounds for the Ministry of Social Solidarity to provide early childhood services to the Egyptian mothers in order to go out to work and contribute to the building of the State. In addition to, the call for issuing a law that organizes the oral divorce cases, after the high rates of separation during the recent period.

In 2017, Ambassador Moushira Khattab was nominated for the post of director-general of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Many of political parties and Egyptian NGOs announced their support for Ambassador Moushira Khattab.

Additionally, Engineer Nadia Abdu was appointed as Beheira governor, who became the first woman in Egyptian history to ever hold this post.

Furthermore, women and youth's representation in the trade union elections has been approved by the Labor Force Committee in the House of Representatives according to a paragraph, stipulates "*to be fair and adequate representation of youth and women in election*", has been added in the article no 35 of the Syndicate Law during the Committee's discussion.

The status of Egyptian women has witnessed two degrees decline in the field of Gender Equality. According to the 2017 Gender Gap report issued by the World Economic Forum; Egypt ranked in the 134<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries. In the Gender Gap Report 2016, Egypt ranked 132<sup>th</sup> out of 144, and in the 2015 Gender Gap Report; Egypt ranked 136<sup>th</sup> out of 142 countries.

## First Section: Women's Political Empowerment

Egypt has witnessed remarkable progress on the level of women's political empowerment. According to the 2017 Gender Gap Report, Egypt ranked in the 107<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries. In comparison with the 2016 Gender Gap Report, Egypt was ranked in the 115<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries, while it ranked in 136<sup>th</sup> according the 2015 Gender Gap Report.

In terms of women in ministerial position, Egypt ranked in the 104<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries in 2017. This is a decline in comparison between the last two years; as Egypt ranked in the 99<sup>th</sup> in 2016 and ranked in the 101<sup>th</sup> in 2015.

Despite of the declaration of "2017 ... The Year of Egyptian Woman", the ministerial reshuffle - that took place in February 2017- was different from expectations. As, only one woman - Dr. Hala Helmy El Said- was appointed as a minister, Minister of planning monitoring and administrative reform, out of nine male ministers.

For the female members of parliament, they have played important roles both at the level of supervisory tools or at the level of nomination in the substantive committees. As its election ended with winning of one female member as a head of a committee, other three as secretaries, and seven female members were elected as vice-president of committees.

Moreover, the Council of State continues its refusal to appoint women. The last of these battles has been started in 2014, when the Council of State announced the need for faculty of law graduates to appoint them in the position of assistant delegate. The Council of State developed a set of requirements and a group of female lawyers went to fill in the applications however the Council of State refused to hand them over the applications. This made one of these female lawyers to file a lawsuit to the Council of state against the non-enrollment of women in the State Council. However, this lawsuit has not been ruled yet because of its postponement more than once. Many NGOs and political parties declared solidarity with Ms. Omnya Taher Gadallah, the woman who filed the lawsuit, and they reject the intransigence of the Council of State in the appointment of the female lawyers which is a violation of the **2014 Constitution**, especially **article no. 11** which states: "*.... The State is committed to take the necessary measures to ensure appropriate representation for women in the Parliament Chambers as specified by law; and shall ensure women's rights to hold public posts, high management posts, and appointment in the judiciary without discrimination; ...*"

## Second Section: Women's Economic Empowerment

According to the indicator of Economic Participation and Opportunities of the 2017 Gender Gap Report, Egypt ranked the 135<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries which is a decline from the 2016 as Egypt ranked in the 132<sup>nd</sup> and ranked in the 139<sup>th</sup> in 2015.

For the women's participation on the labor force indicator, Egypt ranked in the 138<sup>th</sup> out of 144 countries. It is the same rank in 2016 which was 138<sup>th</sup> and ranked 139<sup>th</sup> in 2015. The statistics of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) indicate that the rate of unemployment among men during the fourth quarter of 2017 was 7.8% while the unemployment rate for women during the same period was 23.3%.

**For the Education:** The statistics of the Egyptian Observatory for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators at the Academy of Scientific Research confirmed that the number of female researchers increased to 55 thousand by more than 43% of the number of Egyptian male researchers, and 25% of them received valuable prizes.

In despite of that, there is a gender gap between boys and girls in the enrollment rates in the different educational stages. The statistics of CAPMAS indicate that the enrollment of boys in some educational stages exceeds the enrollment of girls. This is evident in the pre-primary, primary, preparatory, secondary, vocational secondary schools (Industrial or Agricultural) and special education.

While the number of girls in the enrollment in some educational stages was higher than boys in the same educational stages which was shown in the secondary schools and the vocational secondary schools as well as the community schools.

**The data of Egypt's Census 2017 revealed that:**

- The illiteracy rate is 25.8%, this rate is increasing among females to record 30.8%, while illiteracy rate among males is 21.2%.
- Minya governorate had the highest rates of illiteracy among females recording 45.4%, while the Red Sea governorate recorded 15.1% which was the lowest one in terms of female illiteracy.

In 2017, 15 Egyptian women figures took over the leading positions of the 100 most powerful Arab women according to Forbes Middle East<sup>1</sup> including:

Name	Title/Organization
Lobna Helal	Deputy Governor / the Central Bank of Egypt
Elham Mahfouz	the deputy chief executive / the Commercial Bank of Kuwait
Soha Soliman	deputy chairperson / Bank of Cairo
Mona El Garf	the Chair / the Egyptian Competition Authority (ECA)
Mona Zulficar	Founding partner Chair- Zulficar & Partners; EFG Hermes
Sahar Farahat	Senior Executive Vice President/ Egypt Kuwait Holding
Hania Sadek	Chief Operating Officer of HSBC Bank Egypt
Marwa El-Ayouti	CFO/Vodafone Egypt
Hend El Sherbini	Group CEO/Integrated Diagnostics Holdings
Reem Asaad	CEO/ Raya Data Center
Maha Heba EnayetAlla	Head of Business, Board member/Banque Misr
Yasmine Khamis	Executive Board Member; Vice President of Sales and Marketing/ Oriental Weavers Company
Farida Khamis	Executive Board Member; Vice President of Corporate Finance/ Oriental Weavers Company
Shahira Zeid	Vice Chair/ Maridive Group
Soha El-Turky	CFO/ ADIB Egypt

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbesmiddleeast.com/en/list/top-100-powerful-arab-businesswomen-2017/>

## Third Section: Violence Against Women

The Egypt 2017 Population, Housing and Establishment Census indicated to:

- Three million women are widowed representing 10.7 percent of Egyptian women while 2.3 percent of Egyptian men are widowed.
- Around 461,000 women are divorced representing 1.7 percent while 0.9 percent of Egyptian men are divorced.

*Therefore, all women- in the case of widowhood and divorce- are households. This represents a great burden and responsibilities, especially if women have no jobs or any source of income.*

- The statistics also revealed that 118,900 women below the age of 18, the legal age, are married, got divorced or widowed. This refers to the high prevalence of underage marriage which resulted in 1189 cases were divorcees below the age of 18 while the number of widows was 1203.

Thus, young girls are exposed to many health problems when they marry less than 18 years old, as well as some of them expose to the problem of proving descent of their children in the case of divorce before the marriage is officially documented.

All forms of violence against women require a set of legislative reforms that address all types of violence. There are many laws issued during 2017 to address violence against women, including:

### **Toughen Penalties in Sexual Harassment Law:**

The Egyptian legislative parliamentary committee approved a bill pushing for tougher penalties on sexual harassment. The bill would amend Article 306 of the Criminal Code on harassment and rape of children.

### **Amend some articles of the Personal Status Law:**

The House of Representatives approved a draft law submitted by the government to amend some of the provisions of Decree Law No. 25 of 1929 on Personal Status Law which was amended by Law No. 2 of 2006.

The modification includes increasing the time period of any civilian missing for 30 days is to be considered dead, and also included the consideration of police authorities missing in security operations for more than one year as dead.

The modifications were added to the second and third parts of article no.21 & no.22 of the Personal Status law no.25, issued in 1929.

## **Investment Law:**

The Investment Law was issued in June 2017 states in **Chapter (2) Investment Goals and Principles, Article (2)**<sup>2</sup> ".... *Investment is governed by the following principles: 1. Equality of the investment opportunities and equal opportunities regardless of the size and location of the Project and without discrimination on the basis of gender....*"

A number of laws are under study before their enactment, including: Personal Status Law, Labor Law, two draft laws on Reducing Violence against Women, and proposed Law on Criminalizing Early Marriage.

Beside the legislative reform, there are a number of various national efforts to combat violence against women including;

- The National Council for Women National Strategy issued a strategy titled "Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030". The strategy consists of four main pillars: Economic Empowerment, Social Empowerment, Political Empowerment, and Protection".
- The Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation allocates 50% for women from each grant were received by international funding institutions in order to support small and medium enterprises, thus contributing to enhance the economic empowerment of women and provide them with decent jobs, especially women in the most deprived areas.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gafi.gov.eg/English/eServices/Documents/LAw72-english.pdf> page 6

## Fourth section: The efforts of the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights in supporting women legally and politically

**There are several important steps were taken by ECWR as follows:**

- The continuation of "Women's Voices" Project: This project equipped and trained more than 3000 female young leaders across Egypt governorates to run for the upcoming local elections. Some of these young female leaders have been selected in some youth positions in their governorates such as Advisory councils for municipals which were formed in some governorates. It is worth mentioned that this project has been implemented in cooperation with the Fund for Gender Equality-UN Women.
- ECWR issued a training manual entitled "An Effective Female Member in Local Councils": the Training Manual aims to enhance the participation of women in the Local Councils through providing a simple theoretical and practical guide on local council, its importance, and its different units. This manual serves all young women who want to participate effectively in the local councils.
- ECWR participated in launching a unit combating violence against women in Minya University. The launching of this Unit remarks the beginning for activating the “policies and procedures for combating sexual harassment in the University” that was initiated by ECWR in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).  
This unit aims at creating a safe environment on campus and providing protection against any exposure to sexual harassment. This unit offers protection to all the employees and students who suffer from gender-based harassment while they work or study.
- ECWR launched the first interactive website offering legal consultancies "**As Your Lawyer**" <http://ask-mylawyer.com/>. Through the use of new technologies; the website aims to receive legal questions and inquiries from women, men and all members of the society facilitating their access to justice, especially in light of the high prices of the legal services and the economic pressures the society has been recently experiencing.