



musawah

For Equality in the Muslim Family

Musawah Vision

Issue 10: September 2012

An update on Musawah issues and activities

I. Muslim Family Law News

- Bangladesh:** A staggering number of women are victims of dowry-related violence, sexual abuse, rape and acid attacks. - [Odhikar](#)
- Mali:** Activists are deeply concerned about the way fundamentalists have begun to limit women's rights. - [openDemocracy](#)
- Nepal:** The new constitution guarantees recognition and new rights to the country's Muslim minority, including a provision that allows the adoption of a family law. - [Khabar South Asia](#)
- Nigeria:** Instead of spending millions on weddings, Kano State should focus on re-training the judges and imams on the Islamic rules of divorce, custody and maintenance and educating society at large. - [AllAfrica](#)
- Qatar:** The Research Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics calls for renewal of Islamic law and Islamic ethics through contemporary ijthad. - [Qantara](#)
- Tunisia:** Thousands protested against discriminatory new language in the draft constitution, demanding continued full gender equality. - [The Atlantic](#)
- Turkey:** The government dropped a controversial bill that would have slashed the time limit for abortion after thousands took to the streets in protest. - [AlJazeera](#)

II. Building Our Knowledge

Global Life Stories Project

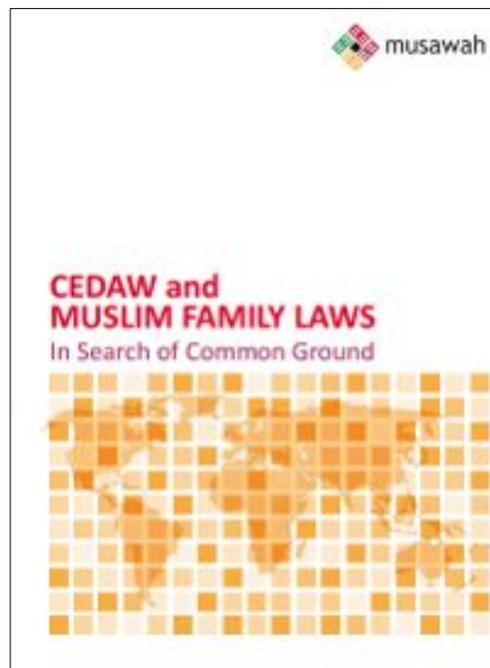
The Global Life Stories Project, part of the Musawah Knowledge Building Initiative on *Qiwamah* and *Wilayah*, began an e-learning circle for the 12 national teams (from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines, United Kingdom) participating in the project. The teams are holding Skype calls every 2-3 weeks to discuss key theoretical readings along with methodological issues involved in implementing the project in their countries. More information on the Knowledge Building Initiative is available [here](#).

Musawah Publications

Musawah Fact Sheet on Indonesia: Marriage and Family Relations was submitted to the CEDAW Committee for review at its 52nd Session in July 2012. In this Fact Sheet, Musawah examines the status of marriage and family relations within the Indonesian context by reviewing the official Indonesia report to the CEDAW Committee and offering responses to issues and points raised in the review process as well as recommendations for action. The report can be accessed [here](#).

Musawah Fact Sheet on Article 16: Algeria and Jordan is a report that takes a critical look at the status of marriage and family relations, as encapsulated in Article 16 of the CEDAW Convention, in Algeria and Jordan, two of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states that reported at the 51st Session of the CEDAW Committee in February 2012. The report can be accessed [here](#).

The Musawah report, *CEDAW and Muslim Family Laws: In Search of Common Ground*, is now available in Arabic on our [website](#).



III. Building Our Movement

Musawah Advocate Updates

Malaysia

Sisters in Islam (SIS), one of 12 country teams taking part in the Global Life Stories [project](#) under the Musawah Knowledge Building Initiative on *Qiwamah* and *Wilayah*, kicked off its work with a methodology workshop for the Malaysian project team from 4-5 June 2012. The objectives of the workshop were to 1) discuss the vision, concept and methodology of the Life Stories project; 2) develop a common framework and build capacity for the knowledge building process for the Malaysian Life Stories project team; 3) to the explore the intersection between the Life Stories project and national projects at SIS. The workshop drew on the content of the global Musawah methodology workshop in Bali in April 2012 and adapted it to the Malaysia context.

Life Stories Reading Circle

As part of its national Life Stories project capacity building efforts, the Malaysian team initiated a monthly reading circle open to SIS staff, members and interested individuals. The reading circle encourages discussions of particular sets of readings on relevant

issues on women and Islam, with a special focus on the concepts of *qiwamah* and *wilayah*. The first Life Stories Reading Circle was held on 30 May 2012. The discussion focused on understanding the meaning of *qiwamah* and *wilayah* in the writings of Omaima Abou Bakr and Asma Lamrabet. The second reading circle was held on 19 July 2012 and focused on the history of feminist theory and contextualizing feminists' engagements in Malaysia.

Seminar: Muslim Legal Tradition and the Challenge of Equality

Sisters in Islam (SIS) organized a two-day seminar on Muslim Legal Tradition and The Challenge of Equality from 26-27 June 2012. Fifty-five academics, activists and NGO representatives attended the seminar given by Dr. Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Musawah founding member, legal anthropologist specialising in Islamic law, gender and development, and member of the Musawah Knowledge Building working group. The seminar



examined the idea of gender equality within the Islamic legal tradition, its challenges and possibilities. Dr. Hosseini also discussed the contribution of feminist theory and Islamic feminism in rethinking notions of gender and equality in the Islamic legal tradition.

Check out Musawah's [Twitter](#) feed for snippets of the seminar, June 26-27.

IV. Outreach

Musawah at a Panel Discussion in Sweden

Musawah International Advisory Group member and Musawah Advocate in Egypt, Marwa Sharafeldin, took part in a panel presentation in Sweden about women and the Arab Spring. She spoke about Islam, women's rights and Islamists in Egypt. She also mentioned our work at Musawah, showing examples such as our [CEDAW report](#) as well as our Strategic Direction [brochure](#).

For the full video of the panel discussion, click [here](#).

Musawah Website

Our recently-revamped website features new highlight stories and resources on a regular basis. Check out our new '[Too Young to Marry](#)' feature with snippets of Musawah's recommendations at the 52nd CEDAW Session held in July 2012, as well as resources on child marriage and Muslim marriage.

Also check out our new '[Remembering Cassandra Balchin, 1962-2012](#)' feature, which includes a farewell letter, tributes from Musawah friends, and key contributions and articles by Cassandra Balchin.

Keep checking the website for more features and new [resources](#) added weekly!



V. International Advocacy

Indonesia was among the countries up for review at the 52nd CEDAW Session in July 2012. The Committee expressed its disappointment with the lack of progress in Indonesia since its last review session. The lack of progress was specifically evident in the way 'the country continued to allow traditional customs such as female genital mutilation, as well as archaic practices such as stoning and caning, polygamy, child marriages, and gender stereotyping' to continue unabated ([UN-NGLS](#)). The Committee's [Concluding Observations](#), particularly in relation to Article 16, were more detailed than usual, specifying areas that need immediate attention. The Committee's recommendations included: 'Repeal, within a clear time frame, all discriminatory laws against women... and repeal, in particular, discriminatory provisions of Marriage Law No. 1/1974' ([OHCHR](#)).

Musawah had submitted to the CEDAW Committee a [Fact Sheet on Indonesia: Marriage and Family Relations](#), in which it examines the status of laws and practices of marriage and family relations within the Indonesian context and offers recommendations for discussion points and actions by the review committee.

VI. Contact Us

Musawah Secretariat: Musawah@musawah.org

Musawah Affinity Groups:

I. Arab region (Middle East and North Africa)

The Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA)

info@cewla.org, www.cewla.org

II. South East, South and Central Asia

Alimat (Musawah Indonesia)

alimat@yahoo.com

III. The Horn of Africa

Musawah Sudan

mahaelzein@yahoo.com,

manalabdel@gmail.com

IV. Sub-Saharan Africa

Musawah Nigeria

asmaujoda@hotmail.com

V. The Gulf Region

Bahrain Women's Union

bahwu@batelco.com.bh

VI. Young Women's Caucus

Facebook page: [YWC](#)

To submit advocate updates or ask questions, write to Musawah at: info@musawah.org