

Women and the World

Meredith Ann O'Connell



Justice for Survivors of Sexual Assault

It has been a summer of progress and justice for women in the Middle East. In the past two months not one but three countries have decided to do away with laws that allowed rapists to escape punishment by marrying their victims. In July, Tunisia passed several laws protecting women from violence, along with abolishing their "marry the rapist" law. In the beginning of August Jordan's lower house of Parliament decided to revoke a similar law; this week, Lebanon's Parliament repealed Article 522 which had dismissed charges if rapists married their victim.

These countries join several others in the Middle East and around the world that have chosen to repeal laws that allow rapists avoid punishment for their crime. Back in 1999, Egypt got rid of its Article 291: now all those convicted of rape are handed 25-year prison sentences. In 2014, Morocco amended its Article 475 after intense international attention following the suicide of a young girl who was forced to marry her rapist. Other countries are debating repealing or amending similar laws in their efforts to protect women and insure justice.

Most crimes do not come with a convenient "window of escape," or "Get out of Jail Free" card that washes the criminal of the crime. If one commits a crime, then they are tried and punished accordingly. While the marrying of a rapist to his victim entails the consent of the victim and/or her family, the fact remains that many times the girls and women involved do not truly consent to such an arrangement as societal and family pressure usually plays a large role.

No woman wants to spend the rest of her life with a man who raped her. "Marry the rapist" laws re-victimize survivors of rape over and over again. Forced to live with her attacker, the woman must subsequently relive the trauma of the attack. In addition to mental abuse their rapist may physically abuse or rape them again, forcing the woman to live in a constant state of fear and anxiety from which she cannot escape.

"Marry the rapist" laws allow rapists to escape their crime. Yet while they go free, the women they have harmed are condemned to living in a prison. They do not receive justice. Abolishing these laws protects survivors' dignity as well as their mental and physical health. Abolishing these laws further underlines the fact that rape is a crime and it will be treated as such.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)

Cookery contest today

DT News Network
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As part of the Onam celebrations, 4PM News in association with Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS) Ladies Wing will be organising 'I-Cook Live' a cookery competition at the BKS auditorium in Segaya today. Twenty contestants will be participating in the event which will begin at 6.30pm. The participants have to prepare a non-vegetarian main course and a sweet dish for the competition. The ingredients will be provided by the organisers. Chefs from prestigious hotels in Bahrain will be the judges for the contest. Winners and participants will get attractive prizes. There will be other

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entertainments programmes and prizes for audience as well. The event is mainly sponsored by Click On. Other sponsors are: Al Osra Group, VMB Traders, Muhammed Fakhroo and Brothers WLL, Saras, Sanford, Hot Pack and Green Way Trading. For registration and more details contact coordinator Mohini Thomas(39804019) or Shijith (38444687).

3 youths to take part in Land Rover 4x4 World Finals



From Left: Yakim Dondi, Robert Dewar and Ahmed Khan

High school students Ahmed Khan, Yakim Dondi and Robert Dewar will be representing Bahrain in the Land Rover 4x4 in Schools competition to be held in the UAE in December. The youngsters, all of whom are 17, will be participating in the finals. The trio will be the first to represent Bahrain in the annual competition which requires participating teams to build a radio-controlled vehicle. Ahmed told DT News that he is expecting a tough competition but are hopeful of bringing the top prize to Bahrain. Excerpts from an interview with Ahmed.

How did you get selected for the competition?

Two of us (myself and Yakim) have already competed in the F1 in Schools World Finals in Singapore in 2015. F1 in Schools is very similar to 4x4 in Schools and the organisers of both competitions are the same. Due to this previous experience of ours, we inquired the possibility of participating in the 4x4 in Schools World Finals. Since there's never been a Bahraini representative, we were directly invited and we hope that we can encourage other students of participating in this competition from next year.

Please explain how the competition works

The Land Rover 4x4 in Schools Technology Challenge requires students to build a radio controlled four-wheel drive (4x4) vehicle to the specifications provided by the International Rules Committee. It must

successfully navigate and complete obstacles on an off-road test track which is just as demanding as a real off-road situation. The vehicle must emulate the capabilities of a full size 4x4 vehicle. The National Champions from each country are then invited to compete at the Land Rover 4x4 in Schools World Finals. The car is not the only aspect of the competition as we have to make presentations, a pit display and portfolios which all have a weight-age to the overall points in crowning the World Champion.

How challenging is this project?

It is very challenging considering that we have to create a 4x4 car on our own along with organizing all the other things needed for this challenge. It would be much easier if we had the funds as we would be able to buy products which would make the process of manufacturing and designing much easier,

along with increasing our chances of propelling Bahrain's name at the World Finals in Abu Dhabi this December.

Why did you decide not to take help from a mentor before participating in this?

Since we already have profound experience in a project which is similar to this, we think that we can work on our own and be able to create a car which will be competitive enough to challenge the other teams at the World Finals. We also want to relinquish the chance to do something challenging on our own and to help increase our engineering knowledge through our own pathways.

Explain your role for the project and that of Yakim and Robert

Yakim is the car manufacturer and engineer. He is in charge of designing the full car and assembling it. Robert is the

graphic designer and logistics manager, which means that he organises the trip, and helps with the design of the car.

How much sponsorship money do you need?

We are currently looking at a budget of BD1500, whereas the minimum we are looking to raise is about BD1200. We already have secured about BD400 of the funds, but we still need a vast amount to cover the costs. Our sponsorship package includes: information and logos of the sponsor in the newspaper, logo on our website, logo on our shirts which we will wear at the world finals across 5 days in Abu Dhabi, logo on our car, logo on our pit display, exposure to thousands of individuals based in the Middle East and around the world. So far, we have sponsors in the form of Mathay Bullens (Belgian company) and Saltid (Bahrain based company).