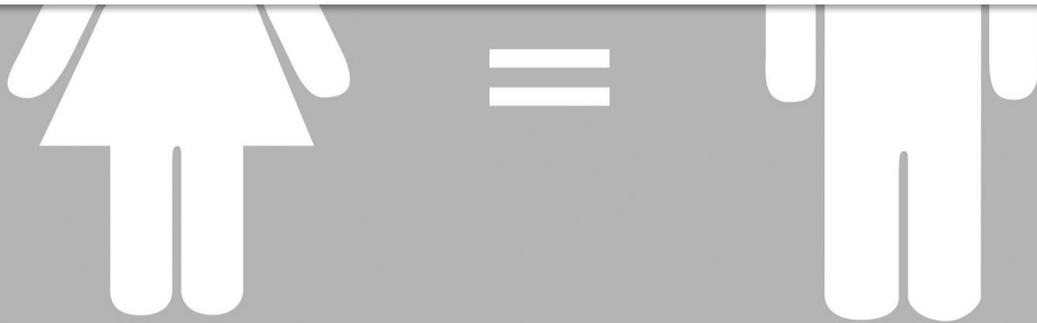


# JMUNESCO'20

## GENERAL COMMITTEE 4: CULTURE





**ISSUE:** Improving gender equality around the world with emphasis on the Middle East region

**STUDENT OFFICERS:** Derin Didinedin, Lara Mengü

### **Introduction:**

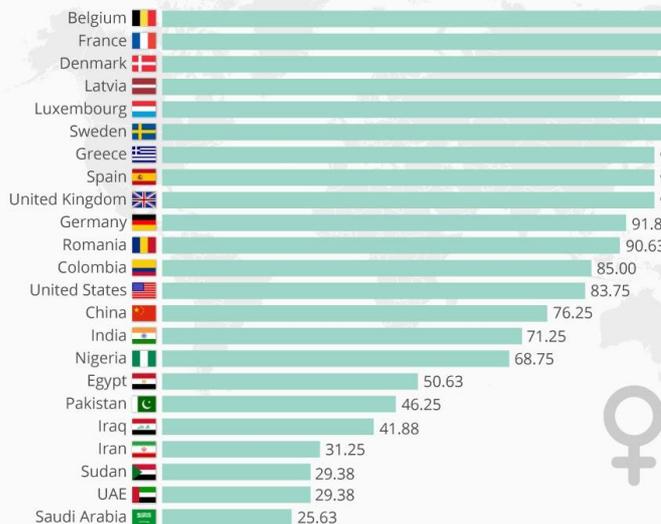
For the last 70 years women's rights have been important rights everyone must consider while living their day-to-day lives. Women's rights, focus on crucial points *including equality of men and women, education, healthcare, social protection and the ability to work or participate in certain professions and career paths.*

Many countries in the world have accepted these rights and have taken the appropriate actions against women but, many countries have not. Especially, in the *Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and Western South America* women are judged by society and denied their well-deserved Human Rights. Women living in these countries face mental and physical abuse, patriarchy and inadequate opportunities on the daily.

Only *six* out of the one hundred and ninety-five countries in the world have granted women one hundred percent equal rights in terms of law. Women have around three-fourths of the legal rights that men have on average.

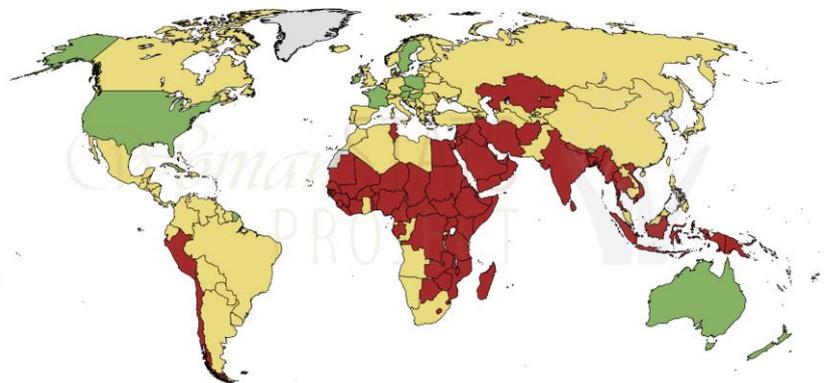
### **Only Six Countries Have Full Equal Rights for Women**

Index scores\* for equality guaranteed by law in selected countries (2019)



### **Practice of Property Rights for Women**

Scaled 2017



**WOMAN STATS PROJECT**  
LO-SCALE-1  
Data The WomanStats Project  
<http://womanstats.org>

- In practice, women face virtually no discrimination in regard to property rights
- In practice, women face some discrimination in regard to property rights
- In practice, women face significant discrimination in regard to property rights
- No Data

\* laws concerning freedom of movement, work, equal pay, marriage, child rearing, business ownership, asset management and pensions taken into account  
Source: Women, Business and the Law 2019 (World Bank)



### **Definition of key terms:**

**Gender:** The two sexes which are believed to be female and male used in terms regarding society and communities rather than biology.

Gender equality: The equivalency of each person regardless of their gender.

Discrimination: The unfair treatment of individuals especially, due to their gender, race, class and beliefs.

Women's empowerment: The activity many women engage in in order to gain confidence, self-love nevertheless, attain the freedom they have been denied throughout history.

### **Background Information:**

#### **The Issue:**

The Middle Eastern wars and conflicts unleashed by the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the 2011 Arab uprisings have had a profound effect on women and gender in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The US-led intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 and the US invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq in 2003 were partly centred on a particular discourse about women and had complex effects on gender relations in both countries. The 2011 uprisings gave rise to opportunities for female political mobilization but also caused multiple crises and restructurings of domestic political orders. The erosion of state capacities, the restoration of authoritarian regimes, the militarization of contentious politics and the pluralization of collective identities triggered by the uprisings impacted negatively on women and gender relations. War has given women a push for equality in some cases, such as among the Kurds in Syria's civil war, where female fighters play a significant role.

However, for the most part, the wars and conflicts which came to the fore following the uprisings have led to an assertion of "traditional" gender relations and the reaffirmation of collective identities, both sectarian and national, in which women are (mis)used as symbols. In Yemen and Libya, war has taken a heavy toll on women. In Syria, the civil war and displacement that followed the uprising against the Bashar al-Assad regime have affected women mostly negatively. In the post-2014 period, the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), on the back of extremist groups such as the al Nusra Front – the al Qaeda affiliate in Syria – led to exceptionally odious phenomena such as the mass enslavement and rape of women and young girls.

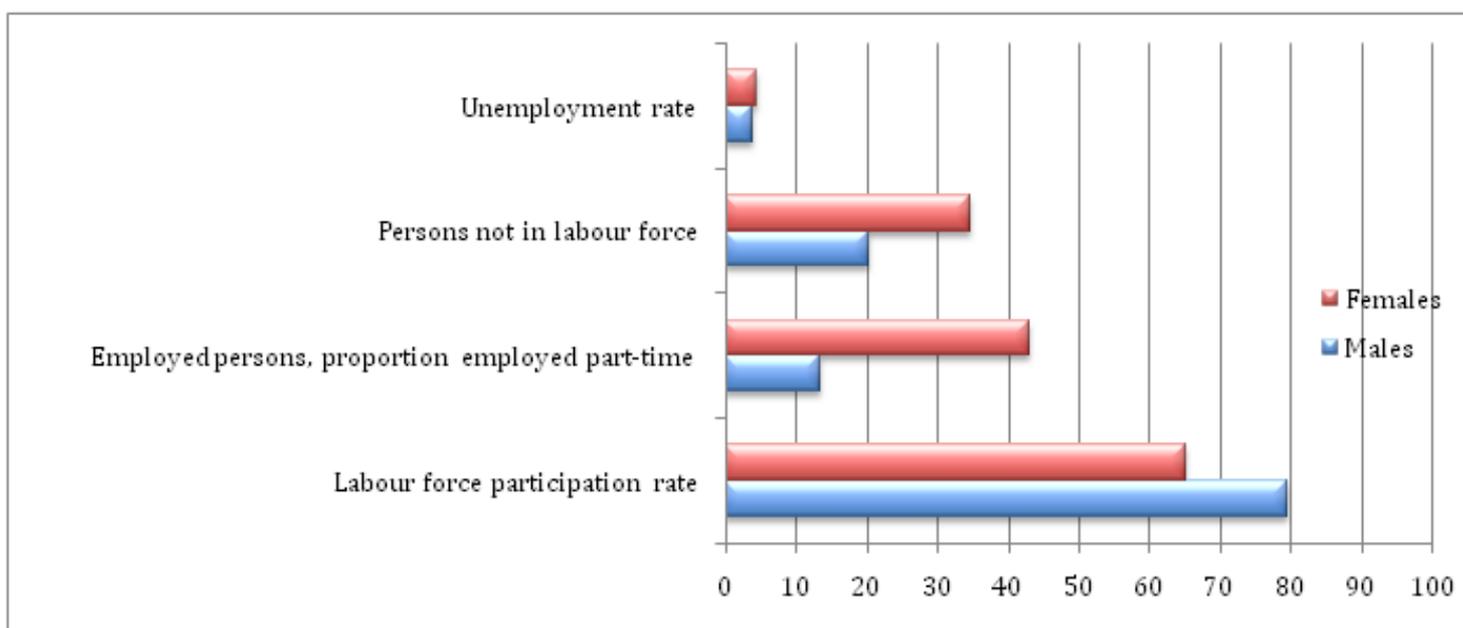
Wars and conflicts in the MENA region have clearly affected women and gender relations, but the reverse is also true. The connections between gender inequality (a complex term which points to broad social relations beyond the situation of women) and civil war have been much discussed in the academic literature. Ascertaining causality in a conventional sense may not be possible or straightforward, but there is some evidence linking the physical security of women, and other indicators of gender equality, with the peacefulness of a state, internal stability and respect for laws and treaties internationally. Gender inequalities have been associated with economic underdevelopment and authoritarianism.

#### **The Current Situation:**

The UN Millennium Development Goals set specific targets to reduce poverty, including targets for increased gender equality in education, work, and representation. UN Women found that progress was uneven. Globally, more women are now in school and work. Yet girls are still more likely than boys to be out of school (particularly at the secondary level). And although the number of women in elected office has risen, they are still only 21.8 percent of parliamentarians. What's more, women's rights remain at risk in many areas not addressed in the millennium goals – from violence against women to sexual and reproductive rights. And women who are

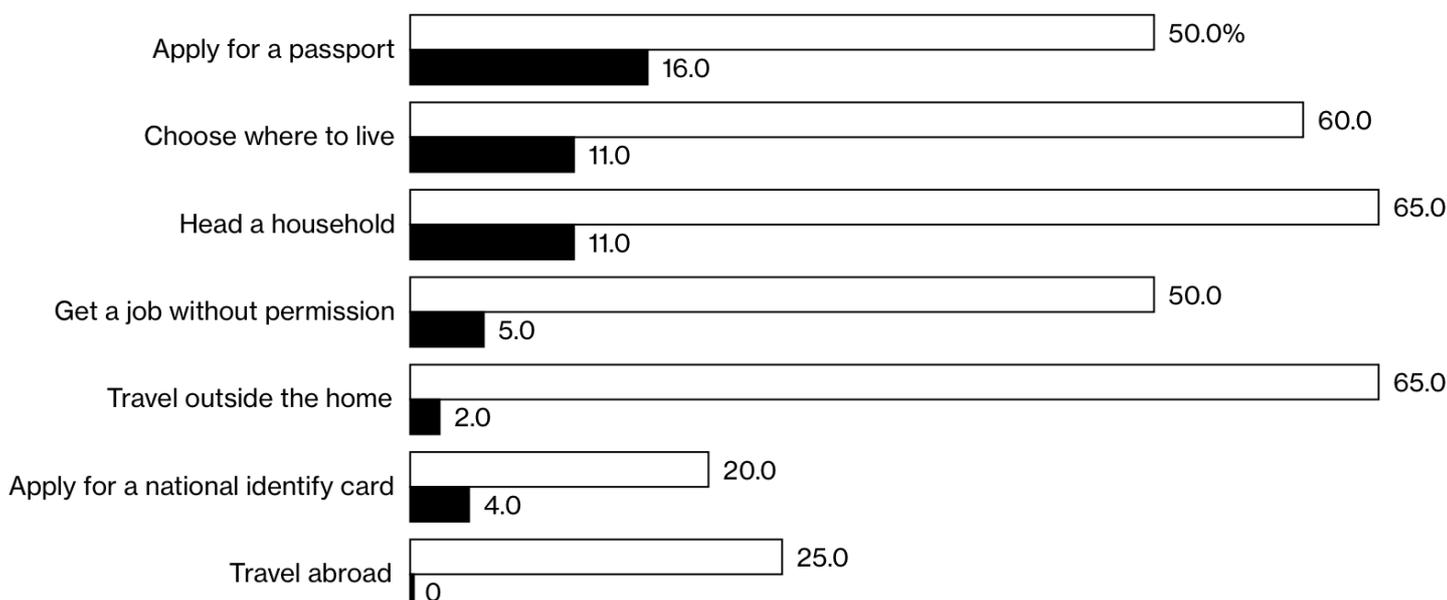
already marginalized because of their race, caste, sexuality, income, or location see the fewest gains of all. The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hold real promise to embed advances in women’s rights, and include a specific goal (Goal 5) for gender equality. Goal 5 is more broad-based than the last gender goal and includes targets on ending gender-based violence, eliminating child marriage and female genital mutilation, and ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health. It also includes equal access to education, expanding women’s economic opportunities, and reducing the burdens of unpaid care work on women and girls. Now it is up to all of us to hold governments accountable for their commitments and make sure the goals are met. Involving women – and funding the solutions of grass-roots women’s groups – will be critical to success.

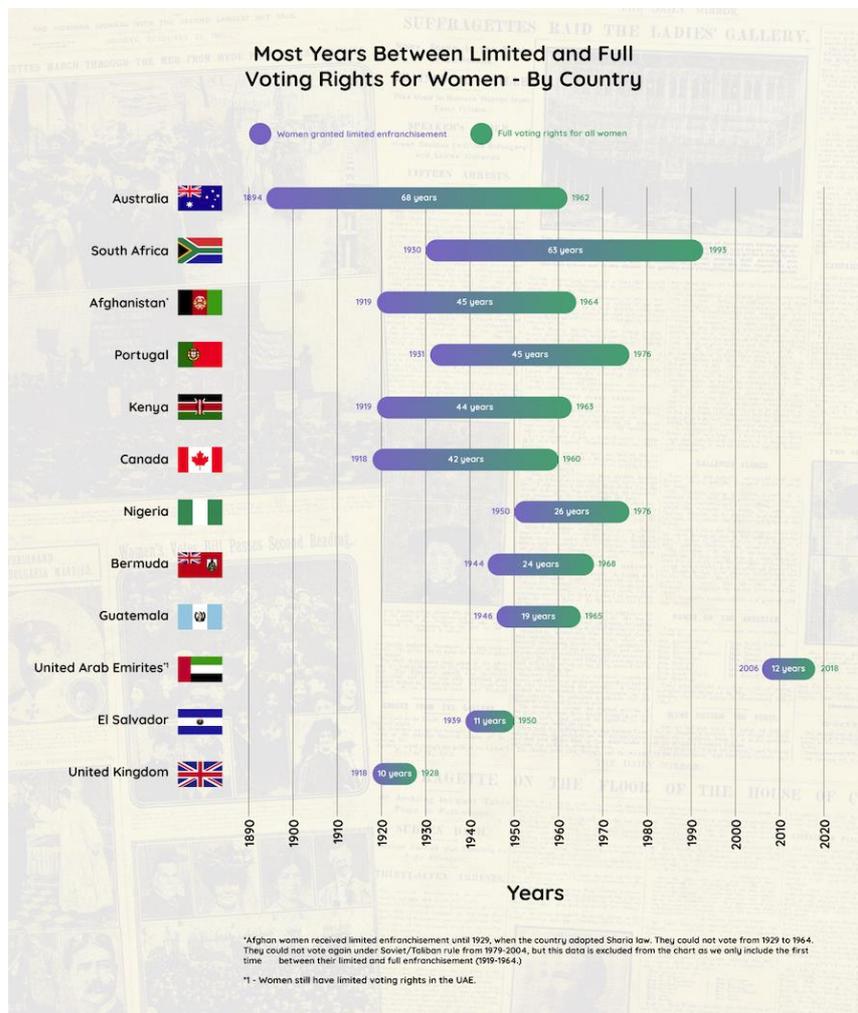
**Statistics, Diagrams and Images:**



Share of countries and territories where women can't legally do things men can

□ Middle East and North Africa ■ Rest of world





### Involved countries and organizations:

#### UN Women:

UN Women is an organisation of the UN created to improve gender equality and support women. It works with civil society organizations as well as governments. UN Women plans and carries out laws and schemes supporting its beliefs. UN Women have four main concerns which are; the support of women, especially from the government, the social and economic security of women, the protection of women from any dangers and the acceptance of women in societies.

#### The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID):

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is an international organization which aims to achieve gender equality and women's rights. AWID has a vision of a world which embraces feminism and in which everything is shared appropriately so that future societies accept, respect and love people. AWID works with activists and builds systems for protection and the health of women.

#### Sweden:

Sweden is a country which has great opportunities for women. More than half of the women in this country are paid very well wages although, many are marginalised in the business world. Sweden believes that women and men should be equal in every way possible. Females in here live in complete safety and they are respected. Sweden is a model country for many other countries. It sets an amazing example for countries which are less developed in eliminating gender inequality and encourages them to take action.

#### Denmark:

Denmark is one of the top ranked countries for women to live in comfortably. There is almost no wage inequality between females and males and the people living in the country have a traditional belief that equality is beneficial. This factor helps women feel socially accepted and as important as men. It's common for mothers to work more than fathers in Denmark. Fathers take care of the kids and stay home, this benefits them as well since they get to spend more time with their families than the average father in the world.

### **Saudi Arabia:**

Saudi Arabia is among the strictest countries in the world due to the importance and commonality of religion. It has a closed mindset compared to many other countries. Saudi Arabia has a regime which is totalitarian and is based upon monarchy, it also follows the sharia law (A religious law which is based on the beliefs of the Islamic religion and the concepts in the Quran). Women in this country have recently gained the rights to vote and drive but they are segregated in most common spaces. Females mostly wear black head scarves and are required to wear black cloaks, they are often not allowed to participate in masculine hobbies such as sports and face harsher legal punishments.

### **India:**

India is one of the countries with the highest rate of improving women's rights. Although it has come a great way, women are still oppressed. They make up only thirty percent of the total labour force. India is working on refining the quality of life for women but males often are treated as if they are superior. Many women still decide on getting abortions when they find out the sex of their baby is female, this increases the male population and dominance.

### **Timeline of events:**

| Date             | Description of the Event   |
|------------------|--|
| July 19-20, 1848 | The first women's rights convention takes place.   |
| 1911             | March 8th was declared International Women's Day.  |
| 1920s            | The first doctors start declaring and accepting the dangers of female genital mutilation . |
| WWI and WWII     | Women start to work in jobs perceived to be masculine by society.                          |
| 1945             | The UN was formed.   |
| 1946             | Eleanor Roosevelt delivers her famous speech supporting and encouraging women in business. |
| 1993             | The UN approves of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.           |
| 2003             | Women in Liberia protest for their rights, this protest ends the ongoing civil war.        |
| 2011 - Present   | Women in almost every country protest for their rights.                                    |

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Day             |  |
| October 9, 2012 | Malala Yousafzai gets shot because she attends school. |
| 12 July, 2013   | Malala Yousafzai delivers her famous speech.           |

**Previous attempts to solve the issue:**

In 1848 at *Seneca Falls, New York*, 200 women and men signed the *Declaration of Sentiments*, a plea for the end of discrimination against women. Following that, in 1878, Susan B. Anthony cast her first vote to the test whether the *Fourteenth Amendment* would be interpreted broadly to guarantee women the right to vote. She was convicted with unlawful voting which concludes that it was not a successful attempt.

On the 10th of May, 1913, the largest suffrage parade to date marched down Fifth Avenue in New York City. 10,000 people, including perhaps some men, paraded past 150-500,000 onlookers. In 1918, *Margaret Sanger*, two years after opening a birth control clinic in Brooklyn, won her suit in the New York federal courts to allow doctors to advise their married parents about birth control for health purposes. The clinic, in conjunction with others, became a Planned Parenthood clinic in 1943. Following that, in 1920, *the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution* was ratified, ensuring the right of women to vote. In 1923, the first version of an *Equal Rights Amendment* was introduced. It declared that, “*Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.*”. By the year 1935, *the National Council of Negro Women* was established. The Council was a vehicle to confront challenges unique to African women, including racial discrimination and the ongoing fight for civil rights, that mainstream feminism did not adequately address.

In December 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama. Although her arrest was in context of racism, the unlawful jurisdictions which is made against her breach amendments regarding women's rights. Parks's arrest sparked a boycott that lasted a year and ended with the supreme court declaring racial segregation unconstitutional. Following that, *the Equal Pay Act* was passed. It promised equitable wages for the same work, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin or gender of the worker. In 1971, Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug and Betty Friedan formed *the National Women's Political Caucus*. It was founded to deliberate women's issues of the day. In the year 1973 *Landmark Supreme Court* ruling (*Roe v. Wade*) made abortion legal. The Supreme Court in a separate ruling banned sex-segregated “help wanted” advertising. By the year of 1981, Sandra Day Connor became the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court. The same year, Lady Diana Spencer deleted the vow to “obey” her husband as she got married to Prince Charles. Prior to 1986 women had no recourse if their director was sexually harassing them. Women had to quit work and seek employment in other workplaces. The Supreme Court determined that making repeated sexual references or advances in the workplace created a hostile work environment that amounted to discrimination on the basis of sex. As a result of this, women could finally seek damages for sexual harassment.

In the year 2009, President Obama signed his first bill into law. It was *the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act*, named after a woman from Alabama, who at the end of her nineteen year career confessed that she had been paid less than her male coworkers for the same job. In the year 2017, millions of women marched globally to defend their rights. The women's movement had been reinvigorated. The sexual harassment

and assault allegations against men who were public figures initiated a movement on social platforms.

### **Possible solutions:**

Delegates may work on the points below for their resolutions.

All forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere should be prevented both publically and privately. In addition to that, all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation should be eliminated by the implementation of governmental and international policies. In regard to the social lives of women, they should have full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public areas. There are some sample solutions for the points mentioned above:

*Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and other stakeholders may initiate positive steps towards promoting equal pay for equal work for women's full participation in the formal economy.*

*United Nations system and other international organizations, may promote innovative programme responses to ensure women's access to decent work, to recognize, reduce and redistribute the unequal burden of care work in order to promote social protection initiatives*

*Governments can also collect, analyse and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and statistics on women's access to decent work, to assess the measures that have to be taken in regard to the governmental policies.*

### **Useful links:**

1. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/gender-equality/>
2. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/law-and-women-middle-east>
3. <https://www.unicef.org/gender-equality>
4. <https://en.unesco.org/genderequality>
5. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-za/gender-equality-around-world>

### **Bibliography:**

1. "UN Women Annual Report 2018–2019." *UN Women | Annual Report 2015–2016*, annualreport.unwomen.org/en/2019.
2. Euronews. "Only 6 Countries in the World Grant Women Equal Rights, Report Says." *Euronews*, 4 Mar. 2019, www.euronews.com/2019/03/03/only-6-countries-in-the-world-grant-women-equal-rights-and-they-are-in-europe.
3. History.com Editors. "Women's History Milestones: A Timeline." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 26 Feb. 2019, www.history.com/topics/womens-history/womens-history-us-timeline.
4. "Gender Equality." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/gender-equality/.
5. "The 10 Worst Countries for Gender Equality, Ranked by Perception." *U.S. News & World Report*, U.S. News & World Report, www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/slideshows/10-worst-countries-for-gender-equality-ranked-by-perception?slide=6.
6. "Timeline: Women of the World, Unite!" *UN Women | Timeline*, interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/timeline/womenunite/en/index.html#/1840.

7. Millington, Alison. "RANKED: The 19 Best Countries to Live in If You're a Woman." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 8 Mar. 2019, [www.businessinsider.com/best-countries-for-women-ranked-2019-2#-18](http://www.businessinsider.com/best-countries-for-women-ranked-2019-2#-18).
8. *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-11/on-women-s-rights-uneven-progress-in-the-middle-east-quicktake](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-11/on-women-s-rights-uneven-progress-in-the-middle-east-quicktake).
9. "What This Graph Shows about Women's Suffrage." *History News Network*, [historynewsnetwork.org/article/170666](http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/170666).
10. "Charter for Women's Rights." *Charter for Women's Rights / Socialist Alliance*, [socialist-alliance.org/policy/women%E2%80%99s-rights-gender-equality/charter-women%E2%80%99s-rights](http://socialist-alliance.org/policy/women%E2%80%99s-rights-gender-equality/charter-women%E2%80%99s-rights).
11. projects, Contributors to Wikimedia. "View That Men and Women Should Receive Equal Treatment, and Should Not Be Discriminated against Based on Gender." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 25 Dec. 2019, [www.wikizeroo.org/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi53aWtpcGVkaWEub3JnL3dpa2kvR2VuZGVyX2VxdWFsaXR5I09yZ2FuaXphdGlvbNfYW5kX21pbmlzdHJpZXM](http://www.wikizeroo.org/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi53aWtpcGVkaWEub3JnL3dpa2kvR2VuZGVyX2VxdWFsaXR5I09yZ2FuaXphdGlvbNfYW5kX21pbmlzdHJpZXM).
12. projects, Contributors to Wikimedia. "View That Men and Women Should Receive Equal Treatment, and Should Not Be Discriminated against Based on Gender." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., 25 Dec. 2019, [www.wikizeroo.org/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi53aWtpcGVkaWEub3JnL3dpa2kvR2VuZGVyX2VxdWFsaXR5I09yZ2FuaXphdGlvbNfYW5kX21pbmlzdHJpZXM](http://www.wikizeroo.org/index.php?q=aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi53aWtpcGVkaWEub3JnL3dpa2kvR2VuZGVyX2VxdWFsaXR5I09yZ2FuaXphdGlvbNfYW5kX21pbmlzdHJpZXM).