

2025 Annual Report on The Status of Women in Egypt



**Egyptian Women 2025:
Rights Gaps and the Shadow of Violence**

Introduction:

The year 2025 marks a stark chapter in the record of violence against women in Egypt, as there has been a noticeable escalation in the frequency and intensity of crimes targeting women. This violence has not been confined to the “private sphere,” with the phenomenon of wife killings continuing under flimsy justifications such as “family disputes,” in shocking cases involving brides who had been married for only a month. Violence has also spilled over into the “public sphere” through ongoing attempts to impose male guardianship and restrict women’s mobility. A stark example is the incident in which an elderly man physically and verbally assaulted a young woman in the metro simply because he disapproved of the way she was sitting, highlighting the persistent efforts to intimidate women and exclude them from public spaces.

On the level of political rights, the recent elections for the House of Representatives and the Senate revealed a deep structural gap between “legislative texts” and the “lived political reality.” While the law guarantees a quota for women, the results highlighted significant challenges that women face in direct electoral contests.

In the Senate elections, women’s presence was entirely confined to the “closed-list” system, while individual seats saw a complete absence of female success. This points to the continued dominance of patriarchal culture and the difficulty women face in breaking into individual constituencies that rely on traditional alliances.

As for the House of Representatives elections, despite intense competition, the numbers revealed a harsh reality: only three female candidates succeeded in securing individual seats out of 173 women who contested. At the same time, women’s victories on the party lists were often “guaranteed” rather than competitive, as in some constituencies only an individual list was running, making the attainment of a seat a mere formality for those included on it.

What is particularly concerning is the behavior of political parties, which have limited themselves to the minimum required by law for women’s representation on their lists (the quota). They did not include any additional women beyond this mandatory threshold, and only a very small number of parties put forward women to compete for individual seats.

This situation raises a fundamental question about the extent to which political parties truly believe in the value of women’s political participation and leadership abilities, or whether their political presence remains merely a technical response to a “legal requirement” to fill the lists, rather than a reflection of a genuine democratic conviction in women’s rightful role in the public sphere.

At the level of economic rights, women’s struggle to enter the labor market continues. Data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics¹ indicate that the gender gap remains wide: while men’s participation in the labor force reached 70.3%, women’s participation did not exceed 16.9%, with the female unemployment rate at 17.1%—equivalent to four times the male unemployment rate of 4.2%.

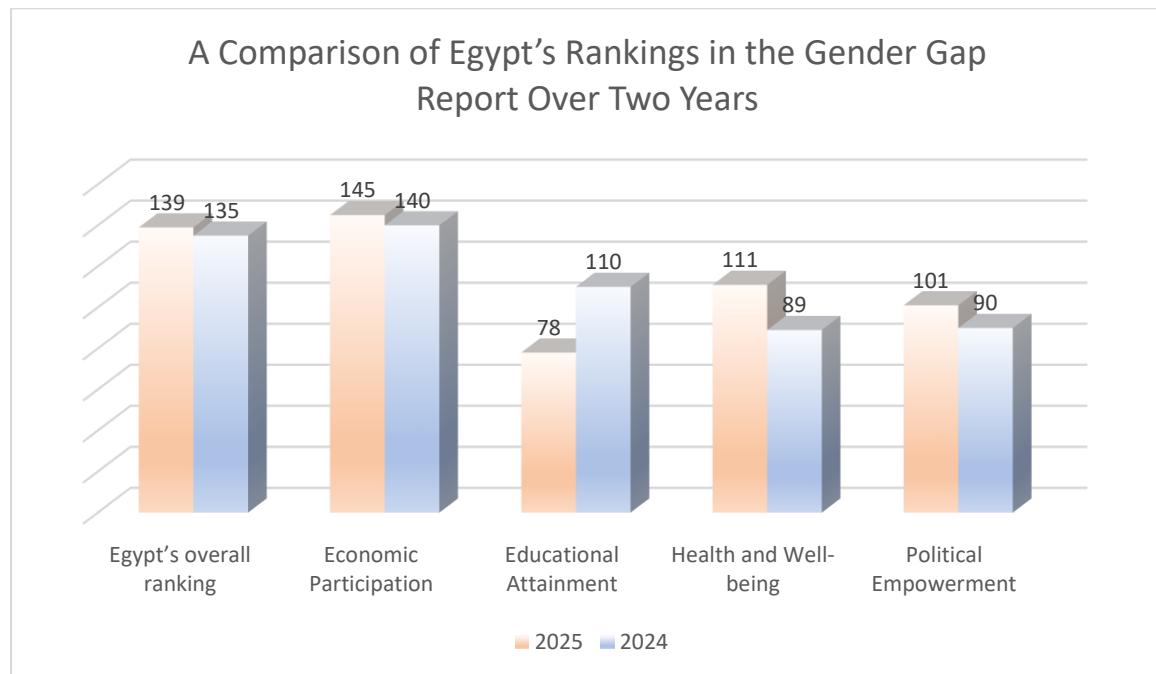
The intersection of these challenges—rising violence, fragile political representation in individual seats, and economic exclusion—not only affects women in Egyptian society but also casts a dark

¹ https://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/GeneralNews.aspx?page_id=1

shadow over Egypt's ranking in international reports and indicators related to women's rights and gender equality.

According to the Gender Gap Report², Egypt ranked 139th out of 148 countries overall, 145th in the Economic Participation Index, 111th in the Health and Well-being Index, 78th in the Educational Attainment Index, and 101st in the Women's Political Empowerment Index.

In comparison, in 2024, Egypt ranked 135th out of 146 countries overall, 140th in Economic Participation, 110th in Educational Attainment, 89th in Health and Well-being, and 90th in Political Empowerment.



Note: The higher a country's ranking number, the worse its situation.

While the Gender Gap Report monitors the gap between men and women, the Human Development Report highlights the impact of “inequality” as a fundamental obstacle to comprehensive national development.

Human Development Report 2025³ (The Cost of Inequality):

The Human Development Report 2025 indicates that:

² Global Gender Gap Report 2025. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2025/>

³ <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2025reporten.pdf>

HDI RANK	Human Development Index (HDI)	SDG 3 Life expectancy at birth (years)	SDG 4.3 Expected years of schooling (years)	SDG 4.4 Mean years of schooling (years)	SDG 8.5 Gross national income (GNI) per capita (2021 PPP \$)	GNI per capita rank minus HDI rank	HDI rank
	Value	2023	2023	2023 ^a	2023 ^a	2023 ^a	2022
High human development							
100 Egypt	0.754	71.6	13.1 ^a	10.1 ^a	16,218	-7	100

Egypt ranked 100th globally out of 193 countries and falls within the High Human Development index, with a value of 0.754. The key dimensions can be summarized as follows:

- **Impact of Inequality:** The Human Development Index loses approximately 22.8% of its actual value when adjusted for inequality (IHDI), reflecting disparities in the distribution of development gains across health, education, and income.
- **Gender Inequality:** Egypt scored 0.398 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII), ranking 101st globally, indicating persistent challenges in political empowerment, labor market participation, and reproductive health.
- **Multidimensional Poverty:** 5.2% of the population experiences deprivation in education, health, and living standards, with an average intensity of deprivation reaching 37.6%.
- **Environmental Dimension:** Environmental pressures—such as carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint—reduced the value of human development by 3.7%, highlighting the environmental cost of achieved growth.

Key Conclusion: Despite Egypt's classification within the high human development index (0.754), the primary challenge lies in inequality, which results in a substantial loss in the index's effective value (a 22.8% reduction). This is compounded by the need to reduce gender inequality (0.398) and to address the environmental costs of growth (a 3.7% loss).

This imbalance in the fair distribution of resources and opportunities is closely linked to the effectiveness of legal and institutional frameworks in protecting individuals and guaranteeing their rights—an issue clearly reflected in Egypt's declining rankings in rule of law indicators.

Rule of Law Index (A Crisis of Protection and Rights)

In 2025, Egypt ranked 135th out of 143 countries on the Rule of Law Index⁴ issued by the World Justice Project⁵, a markedly low position given Egypt's long-established legal and judicial institutions and its civil justice system, which spans more than 100 years. Notably, Egypt has experienced a significant decline in its ranking: it placed 88th in 2015 and 110th in 2018.

⁴ <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/downloads/WJPIindex2025.pdf>

⁵ The Rule of Law Index is issued by the World Justice Project and covers 143 countries and jurisdictions. It is based on more than 149,000 household surveys and 3,400 surveys of legal practitioners and experts, measuring how the rule of law is both experienced and perceived around the world. The Index has been published annually since 2009, follows a rigorous methodology, and is widely used by governments, multilateral organizations, businesses, academia, the media, and civil society organizations worldwide to assess and address gaps in the rule of law.

The World Justice Project defines the rule of law as a durable system of laws, institutions, norms, and community commitment that delivers accountability, just laws, open government, and accessible justice. The Index assesses the rule of law in each country based on eight sub-factors: constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, and criminal justice.

The Rule of Law Index provides a comprehensive assessment of the state of the rule of law in countries by analyzing eight key factors: constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, and criminal justice.

Factor	Global Ranking	Regional Ranking	Domestic Ranking
Constraints on Government Powers	141 / 143	10 / 10	34 / 35
Absence of Corruption	106 / 143	9 / 10	17 / 35
Open Government	143 / 143	10 / 10	35 / 35
Fundamental Rights	141 / 143	9 / 10	34 / 35
Order and Security	101 / 143	8 / 10	21 / 35
Regulatory Enforcement	135 / 143	10 / 10	31 / 35
Civil Justice	131 / 143	10 / 10	29 / 35
Criminal Justice	107 / 143	8 / 10	21 / 35

(1) is the best ranking in the Rule of Law Index by the World Justice Project.

The analysis shows that Egypt's overall low ranking (135/143) is primarily driven by extremely poor performance in factors related to good governance, constraints on power, and fundamental rights. In contrast, factors associated with order and security recorded the relatively best performance, indicating that security stability has not translated into corresponding improvements in rights, governance, and accountability.

The 2025 assessment reveals a wide gap between the “official discourse” on empowerment and the “lived reality” of Egyptian women. The concurrence of rising physical violence in both public and private spaces, alongside declining rankings in the rule of law and fundamental rights, demonstrates that women’s protection cannot be achieved without comprehensive justice system reform.

Security alone (as reflected in the Rule of Law Index) has not ensured personal safety for women, and parliamentary quotas have not translated into genuine party-level belief in women’s capabilities. Meanwhile, economic disparities and the pressures of time continue to obstruct any real improvement in Egypt’s international standing. Improving Egypt’s position in global reports does not require “cosmetic adjustments to the numbers” but demands political will: adopting a unified law against violence, activating mechanisms for party accountability, and bridging the gender gap in wages and employment opportunities—an urgent necessity to salvage the path of human development hindered by persistent inequality.

Section One: Civil and Political Rights

According to the 2025 Gender Gap Report issued by the World Economic Forum, Egypt ranked 101st in the Women’s Political Empowerment Index out of 148 countries.

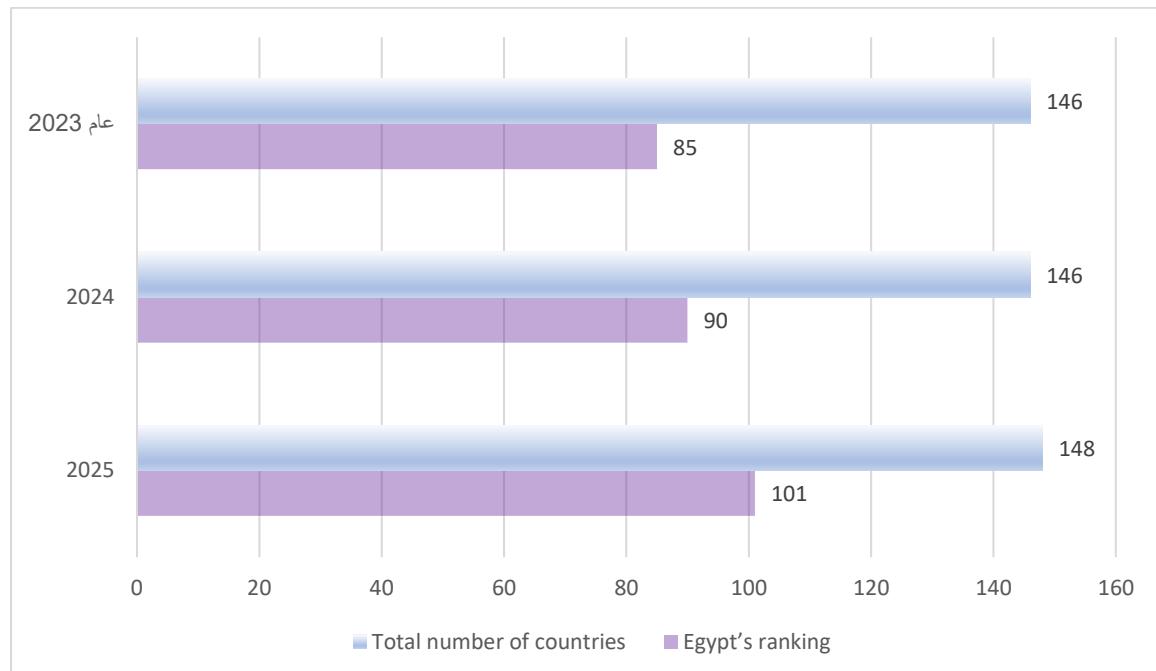
The political empowerment index comprises several sub-indicators, including:

- **Women’s Representation in Parliament:** This is Egypt’s strongest area, where it ranked 73rd globally.

- **Women's Representation in Ministerial Positions:** Egypt showed a noticeable decline in this area, ranking 108th globally.
- **Head of State (Past 50 Years):** Egypt ranked 81st globally in terms of women attaining the position of head of state or head of government over the past five decades.

This performance reflects a decline in Egypt's ranking within the same index. According to the report, Egypt ranked 85th globally in 2023, 90th in 2024, and has now settled at 101st in 2025.

The following chart illustrates Egypt's ranking in the Women's Political Empowerment Index over three years, according to the Gender Gap Report



Note: The higher a country's ranking number, the worse its situation.

Egypt was ranked 85th out of 183 countries for the number of women in parliament, according to Inter-Parliamentary Union data⁶ from November 2025. This marks a decline from the previous year, when Egypt held the 81st position in 2024.

Women and the Judiciary:

- In an effort to enhance women's representation in the judiciary, the President issued Decree No. 447 of 2025⁷, appointing 48 women as assistant delegates in the State Council, representing 23% of total appointments. This step crowns a long struggle, given the gap in women's judicial representation between the global average (over 25%) and the Arab average (around 14%). Disparities are particularly evident within the Arab world, ranging from 43% in Tunisia to less than 1% in countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. These differences underscore that promoting women's presence in the judiciary requires systematic policies to achieve real progress.

⁶ https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/?date_month=11&date_year=2025

⁷ https://issuu.com/youm7/docs/_34_abd3436ae7a248

- In a further milestone for Egyptian women in the judiciary, Counselor Dr. Amani Ragab was appointed as a member of the Technical Office of the Legislation Department at the State Council, becoming the first female judge to hold this senior position. Counselor Ragab joined the State Litigation Authority in 2013 and progressed through judicial positions, becoming one of the first female judges appointed to the State Council in 2022, marking a historic step in supporting women's empowerment in the judiciary.

Women in Parliament

The year 2025 witnessed an important constitutional milestone with the elections for the Senate and the House of Representatives. The following provides an analysis of the electoral process and its results from a gender perspective.

First: Senate Elections

Legislation Related to the 2025 Senate Elections

1. Presidential Decrees Dissolving the Ordinary Sessions of Parliament

President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi issued two presidential decrees dissolving the fifth ordinary session of both the House of Representatives and the Senate, effective Wednesday, 9 July 2025⁸:

- Decree No. 368 of 2025 dissolved the House of Representatives after approval.
- Decree No. 369 of 2025 dissolved the Senate after approval as well.

Following these decrees, preparatory legislation was issued for the elections of both chambers. The Senate elections were scheduled for August 2025.

2. Amendment to the Senate Elections Law

Law No. 84 of 2025⁹ was issued to amend certain provisions of the Senate Law issued under Law No. 141 of 2020, which stipulates the following:

Article (1): The provisions of Articles 3 (first paragraph), 4 (second paragraph), and 11 (second and fourth paragraphs) of the Senate Law issued under Law No. 141 of 2020 are replaced with the following texts:

Article (3) (first paragraph): The Arab Republic of Egypt shall be divided into 27 constituencies for individual (first-past-the-post) elections and 4 constituencies for list-based elections. Two of these constituencies are allocated 13 seats each, while the other two are allocated 37 seats each. The scope and composition of each constituency are specified in the tables attached to this law.

Article (4) (second paragraph): Each list allocated 13 seats must include at least three women, and each list allocated 37 seats must include at least seven women.

⁸ <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Story/314924/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%8A%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B5%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B9%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B3-%D9%84%D9%80%C2%AB%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A8%C2%BB-%D9%88%C2%AB%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%AE%C2%BB?lang=ar>

⁹ القانون رقم 84 لسنة 2025, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcgjclefindmkaj/https://lawhub.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/LAWHUB.info_EG_law_84-2025.pdf

This amendment strengthens women's representation in the Senate by mandating minimum female participation on electoral lists.

Accordingly, the main amendments in Law No. 84 of 2025 are as follows:

- Redistribution of List-Based Seats: While maintaining the total number of seats (100), the distribution was changed to two constituencies with 13 seats each (instead of 15) and two constituencies with 37 seats each (instead of 35).
- Women's Representation:
 - Smaller lists (13 seats instead of 15): The minimum percentage of women representation increased slightly, from 20% to 23.08%.
 - Larger lists (37 seats instead of 35): The minimum percentage of women representation decreased slightly, from 20% to 18.92%.

This analysis demonstrates that the adjustment in the number of seats per list, while keeping the absolute number of women required, led to variations in the minimum percentage of female representation across different types of electoral lists.

3. Timeline for the Senate Elections

Law No. 6 of 2025 was issued regarding the procedural and chronological schedule for the Senate elections, stipulating the following:

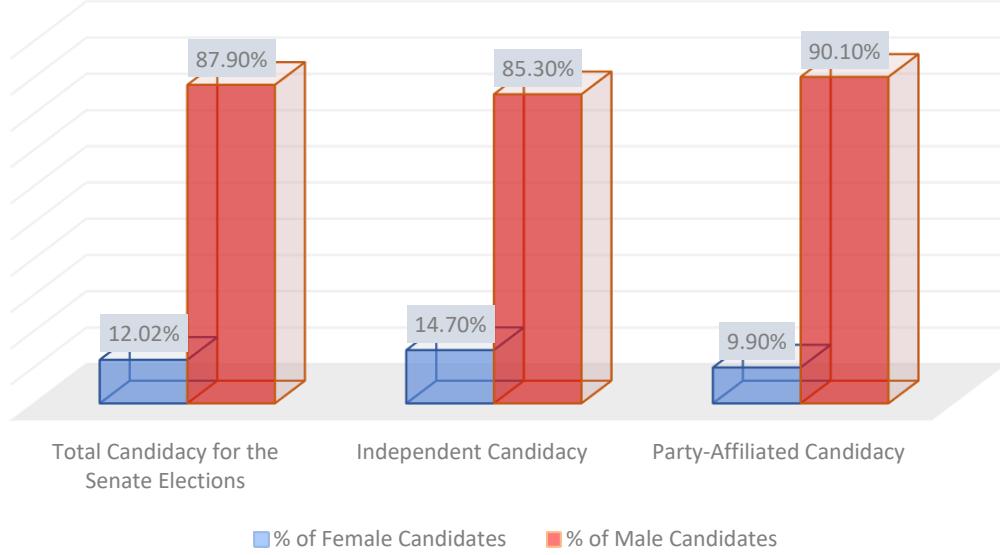
- Overseas voting: Friday and Saturday, 1–2 August 2025.
- Domestic voting: Monday and Tuesday, 3–4 August 2025.
- Run-off elections overseas: Monday and Tuesday, 25–26 August 2025.
- Run-off elections domestically: Wednesday and Thursday, 27–28 August 2025.
- Announcement of results: no later than Thursday, 4 September 2025.

Number of Female Candidates in the 2025 Senate Elections

Women running for individual seats:

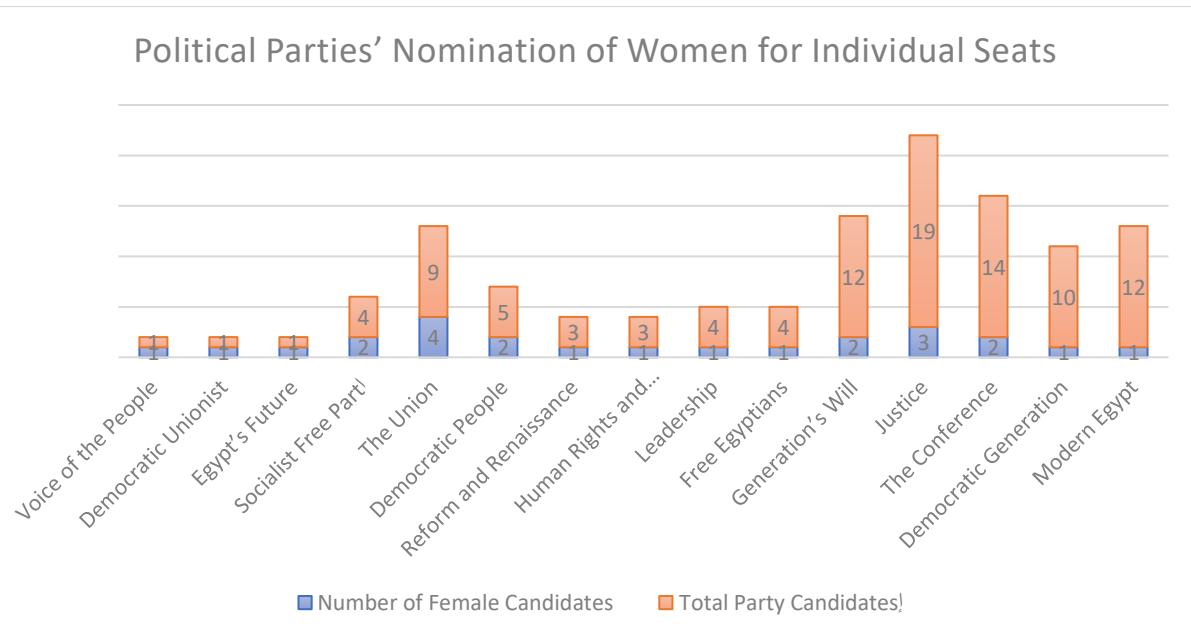
- There are 27 individual constituencies, with a total of 424 candidates, of whom 51 were women, representing 12% of all candidates.
- Among the 183 independent candidates, 27 were women, representing 14.7% of independents.
- Among the 241 candidates from political parties, 24 were women, representing 9.9% of party-affiliated candidates.

Women's Candidacy Rates in the 2025 Senate Elections



- Provinces with No Female Candidates: There were 12 governorates where no women ran, namely: Aswan, Luxor, Red Sea, New Valley, Beni Suef, Port Said, South Sinai, North Sinai, Kafr El Sheikh, Marsa Matrouh, Sohag, and Minya.
- Political Parties Supporting Candidates for Individual Seats: A total of 33 political parties fielded both male and female candidates, including: Future of the Nation, Homeland Defenders, National Front, Reform and Development, Congress, Republican People's Party, Socialist Free Party, Leadership, Voice of the People, National Egypt, Awareness, Egyptian Social Democratic Party, Egypt October, Democratic Peace, New Independents, Reform and Renaissance, Democratic Unionist, Democratic Generation, Modern Egypt, Arab Democratic Nasserist, Conservatives, Egyptians, Generation's Will, Egyptian Wafd, Human Rights and Citizenship, Sons of Egypt, Egypt My Country, Al-Nour, Justice, Egypt's Future, Democratic People, Union, and Free Egyptians.
- Political Parties That Did Not Nominate Any Women: 18 political parties fielded only male candidates and did not nominate any women, including: Future of the Nation, Homeland Defenders, Reform and Development, National Front, Republican People's Party, National Egypt, Awareness, Egyptian Social Democratic Party, Egypt October, Democratic Peace, New Independents, Arab Democratic Nasserist, Conservatives, Egyptians, Egyptian Wafd, Sons of Egypt, Egypt My Country, and Al-Nour.

The following chart illustrates the numbers and percentages of female candidates from 15 political parties that supported women running for individual seats:



The chart above demonstrates a detailed overview of political parties' contributions to the electoral landscape for individual seats, with a focus on women's representation within party-supported candidate lists. The table shows that 15 political parties fielded female candidates among their total candidates for individual seats, bringing the total number of party-supported female candidates to 24 out of 241 candidates endorsed by these parties combined.

- **Parties with Full Female Representation (100%)**
 - Voice of the People, Democratic Unionist, Egypt's Future: These three parties each supported one female candidate, who was the only candidate they nominated.
- **Parties with High Female Representation (Over 40%)**
 - Socialist Free Party: Supported 2 female candidates out of 4 (50% female representation), a very strong showing.
 - The Union: Supported 4 female candidates out of 9 (44.4% female representation).
 - Democratic People: Supported 2 female candidates out of 5 (40% female representation).
- **Parties with Medium Female Representation (25%–33.3%)**
 - Reform and Renaissance, Human Rights and Citizenship: Each supported 1 female candidate out of 3 (33.3% female representation).
 - Leadership, Free Egyptians: Each supported 1 female candidate out of 4 (25% female representation).
- **Parties with Low Female Representation (Less than 20%)**
 - Generation's Will: Supported 2 women out of 12 candidates (16.6%).
 - Justice: Supported 3 women out of 19 candidates (15.7%).
 - The Conference: Supported 2 women out of 14 candidates (14.2%).
 - Democratic Generation: Supported 1 woman out of 10 candidates (10%).
 - Modern Egypt: Supported 1 woman out of 12 candidates (8.3%).

These parties, despite supporting female candidates, show lower female representation compared to their total number of candidates.

- **Women Running on Party Lists**

The 2025 Senate elections are conducted under a list-based system with 4 constituencies:

- Two constituencies with 37 seats each, where the law mandates at least 7 women per list.
These are:
 1. Constituency 1: Cairo sector and South and Central Delta
 2. Constituency 2: North, Central, and South Upper Egypt
- Two constituencies with 13 seats each, where the law mandates at least 3 women per list.
These are:
 3. Constituency 3: East Delta sector
 4. Constituency 4: West Delta sector

Only one list contested across all four constituencies: “The National List for Egypt”, which included 12 political parties, namely: Future of the Nation, Homeland Defenders, National Front, Egyptian Social Democratic Party, Republican People’s Party, Reform and Development, Tagamoa’a, Wafd, The Conference, Justice, Generation’s Will, and Egyptian Freedom.

- **Women’s Representation on Party Lists: Questions about parties’ commitment**

Data on political parties nominating women on the Senate party lists shows adherence to the minimum requirement mandated by the election law. The law stipulates a specific number of female candidates as a prerequisite for accepting the electoral list applications. In this context, the “National List for Egypt”—the only list contesting the Senate elections—complied with this legal requirement but limited itself to the minimum number of women required.

In the original list of the “National List for Egypt”, the total number of female candidates was 20 women distributed across the four constituencies as follows:

- Constituency 1: 7 women (required: 7 for 37-seat constituencies)
- Constituency 2: 7 women (required: 7 for 37-seat constituencies)
- Constituency 3: 3 women (required: 3 for 13-seat constituencies)
- Constituency 4: 3 women (required: 3 for 13-seat constituencies)

The reliance on the legal minimum, without exceeding it in any constituency, indicates that the list and its constituent parties may have focused primarily on meeting the formal requirements for candidacy rather than a genuine commitment to expanding women’s representation beyond the mandatory threshold. This pattern raises questions about the depth of these parties’ belief in the importance of full women’s participation in political and parliamentary life.

In the reserve list of the “National List for Egypt,” the total number of female candidates was 29 women distributed across the four constituencies as follows:

- Constituency 1: 8 women (required: 7 for 37-seat constituencies)
- Constituency 2: 13 women (required: 7 for 37-seat constituencies)
- Constituency 3: 4 women (required: 3 for 13-seat constituencies)
- Constituency 4: 4 women (required: 3 for 13-seat constituencies)

This significant increase in the number of women on the reserve lists indicates that the parties composing the National List do not lack qualified female candidates. On the contrary, the presence of

a larger number of women in the reserve lists raises the question of why the original lists, which directly contest the elections, only include the minimum required.

This nomination pattern may suggest a lack of genuine commitment to exceeding the minimum female representation in prominent and influential positions, or a failure to prioritize placing more women in the frontline candidacies, despite the availability of qualified candidates. Such behavior invites discussion about the depth of parties' commitment to politically empowering women beyond mere formal compliance with legal requirements.

2025 Senate Election Results from a Gender Perspective:

Individual Seats: A Severe Decline in Women's Representation

- No female candidate won any individual seat, despite 51 women running out of 424 candidates for individual constituencies. None were able to secure a seat, including in the run-off round, which also had no female candidates.

This result raises serious questions regarding:

- Public Acceptance of Female Candidates: Does societal or electoral bias against women candidates in individual elections still persist?
- Party Support: Did female candidates receive sufficient support from their parties, whether financial or logistical, to fund their campaigns and secure victory?
- Candidate Strength: Were female candidates able to mobilize popular support and establish strong electoral bases comparable to their male counterparts?

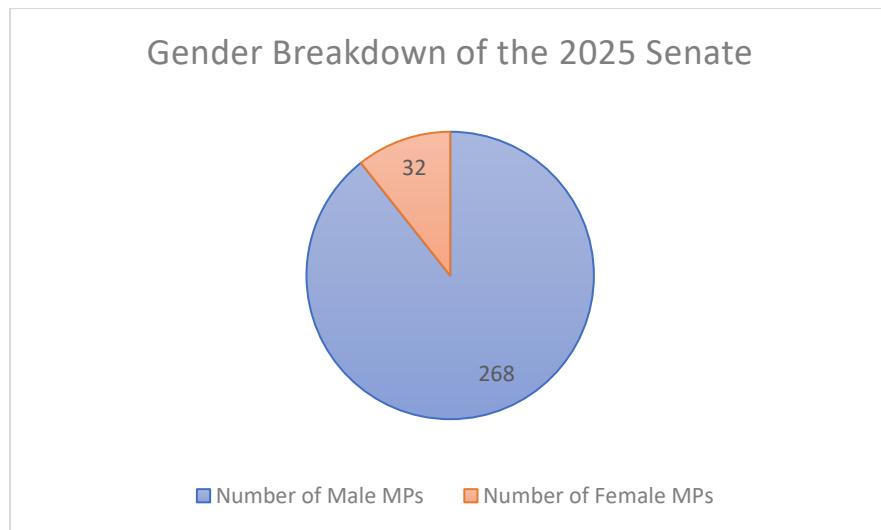
Party Lists: The Minimum Is Prevailing

- The only list to win, the "National List for Egypt", complied only with the minimum required female representation, resulting in the election of only 20 women via the party lists.

Appointed Members in the Senate:

Presidential Decree No. 575 of 2025 named the appointed members of the Senate. According to the law, 100 members were appointed, of whom 12 were women, representing 12% of the appointed list.

Overall Representation: Combining elected and appointed seats, the total number of women in the Senate reached 32 out of 300 members, representing 10.6% of the total.



2. House of Representatives Elections 2025

Legislative Framework for the 2025 House of Representatives Elections:

The elections for the House of Representatives are conducted within a comprehensive legislative framework, which includes a set of laws, decrees, and mechanisms regulating the entire electoral process. This framework covers all aspects, from eligibility criteria and the acceptance of candidacy applications, through the campaign period, procedural and chronological schedule of voting, to the announcement of results. This legislative framework is embodied in the following legal instruments:

2014 Constitution and Its Amendments

The constitution forms the cornerstone of any state, from which all legislation and laws derive legitimacy. Within this framework, the Egyptian Constitution¹⁰ of 2014 and its subsequent amendments in April 2019 placed significant emphasis on enhancing women's rights and ensuring their effective political participation.

This commitment has been manifested through clear constitutional texts that guarantee women full equality, as well as their right to run for elections, vote, and participate in decision-making at all levels, whether in the House of Representatives or local councils.

Beyond general guarantees, the 2019 constitutional amendments introduced practical measures, including:

- A minimum quota of 25% of the total seats in the House of Representatives for women.
- Allocation of one-quarter of local council seats to women, ensuring meaningful representation that reflects their pivotal role in society.

Key constitutional articles, such as Article 11, emphasize the achievement of equality and the guarantee of adequate representation in legislative councils, while Article 180 regulates the

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<https://www.presidency.eg/ar/%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1/>

mechanisms of women's representation at the local level. Together, these provisions establish the Egyptian constitution as a robust legislative framework for politically empowering women.

Law No. 85 of 2025 amending certain provisions of the House of Representatives Law:

The law has focused on organizing the electoral process by determining the number of electoral districts and their division within the Arab Republic of Egypt, while setting the regulations for forming electoral lists, the number of candidates on each list, and the number of candidates to be elected from each constituency for individual seats.

Article (4) first paragraph, states:

"The Arab Republic of Egypt is divided into a number of constituencies designated for election by the individual-seat system, and four districts designated for election by the party-list system. As for the party-list system, it includes four list-based constituencies; two constituencies are allocated 40 seats each and two constituencies are allocated 102 seats each.

A special law determines the scope and components of each electoral district and the number of seats allocated to it for each governorate."

Article 5:

Regarding requirements for electoral lists: each list must include the exact number of candidates matching the number of seats required in that constituency and an equal number of substitute candidates.

With regard to the 40-seat list, it must include at least three Christian candidates, two candidates who are workers or farmers, two youth candidates, one candidate with a disability, one candidate from Egyptians residing abroad, at least 20 women, whether or not they belong to the above categories.

Regarding the 102-seat list, it must include at least nine Christian candidates, six candidates who are workers or farmers, six youth candidates, three candidates with disabilities, three candidates from Egyptians residing abroad and at least 51 women, whether or not they belong to the above categories.

In all cases, the substitute candidates must meet the same numbers and categories specified above, and any list that does not fulfill any of the conditions and provisions set forth in this article shall not be accepted.

A single list may include candidates from more than one party, and it may also be composed of independent candidates who are not affiliated with any party, or it may combine both.

Accordingly, the total number of candidates on the four main electoral lists amounts to 284 candidates, including 142 women, which means that women's representation reaches 50% of the total candidates on the lists.

Law No. 46 of 2014 issuing the House of Representatives Law¹¹:

Articles 1, 3, 7, and 27 provide the following:

¹¹ <https://www.elections.eg/images/pdfs/laws/prlaman-46-2014.pdf>

- The House of Representatives consists of 568 elected members, with a quota for women estimated at 25% of the seats. The President of the Republic appoints 5% of the members, i.e., 28 members.
- The election of the House of Representatives is divided equally, with 284 seats elected by the individual-seat system and 284 seats by the closed-list system, meaning that elections are 50% individual and 50% list-based.
- The term of membership in the House of Representatives is five Gregorian years.
- Half of the President's appointments (5%) must be women.

Decisions of the National Elections Authority No. 37 and No. 38 of 2025 concerning the call of voters for the House of Representatives elections and the procedural and time schedule of the elections:

- The first phase of the elections will be held in 14 governorates: (Giza, Fayoum, Beni Suef, Minya, Assiut, New Valley, Sohag, Qena, Luxor, Aswan, Red Sea, Alexandria, Beheira, and Matrouh). Voting abroad will take place on 7 and 8 November 2025 and voting inside Egypt on 10 and 11 November 2025. The runoff round will be held abroad on 1 and 2 December 2025, and inside Egypt on 3 and 4 December 2025.
- The second phase of the elections will be held in 13 governorates: (Cairo, Qalyubia, Dakahlia, Monufia, Gharbia, Kafr El Sheikh, Sharqia, Damietta, Port Said, Ismailia, Suez, South Sinai, and North Sinai). Voting abroad will take place on 21 and 22 November 2025 and voting inside Egypt on 23 and 24 November 2025. The runoff round will be held abroad on 15 and 16 December 2025, and inside Egypt on 17 and 18 December 2025.

Women's Representation in the House of Representatives Elections

First: Female candidates on the electoral lists

- The 2025 House of Representatives elections are conducted under the list system in four constituencies. Two constituencies each consist of 102 seats, and the law stipulates that each must include at least 51 women (the first constituency: Cairo and South & Central Delta sector; the second constituency: North, Central, and South Upper Egypt sector).
- Two other constituencies consist of 40 seats each, and the law stipulates that each must include at least 20 women (the third constituency: East Delta sector; the fourth constituency: West Delta sector).
- The candidacy papers of only one electoral list were accepted across the four constituencies: the National List for Egypt, which includes 14 political parties, namely (Future of the Nation, Protectors of the Nation, National Front, Egyptian Democratic Social Party, Republican People's Party, Reform and Development Party, Tagammu, Wafd, Conference Party, Justice Party, Generation's Will Party, Egyptian Freedom Party, Future of Egypt Party, and Al-Masri Party), in addition to a number of independent candidates.

Between the Text and Reality: The Dilemma of Compliance with the Minimum Threshold of Women's Representation

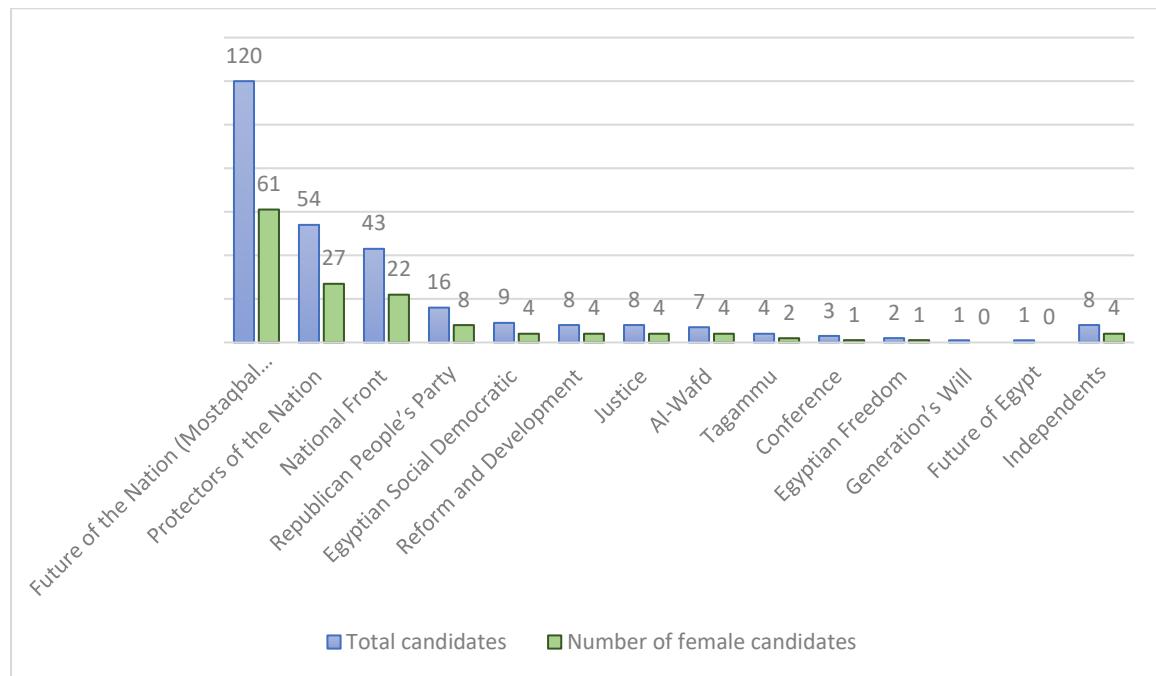
The “National List for Egypt” adhered to the legally mandated minimum threshold for women's representation as stipulated by law. This confirms the law's ability to impose formal standards of representation, while simultaneously highlighting the problem of political parties limiting themselves to this minimum and failing to pursue the genuine empowerment of women in truly competitive positions.

The total number of female candidates on the main list of the “National List for Egypt” reached 142 women, distributed across the four constituencies as follows:

- First constituency (Cairo and South & Central Delta sector): 51 women (51 required for a constituency with 102 seats).
- Second constituency (North, Central, and South Upper Egypt sector): 51 women (51 required for a constituency with 102 seats).
- Third constituency (East Delta sector): 20 women (20 required for a constituency with 40 seats).
- Fourth constituency (West Delta sector): 20 women (20 required for a constituency with 40 seats).

This strict adherence to the legal minimum—without exceeding it in any constituency—suggests that the list and its constituent parties may be primarily focused on fulfilling the formal requirements for candidacy acceptance, rather than demonstrating a genuine belief in the importance of strengthening women’s roles or a full conviction in expanding their representation beyond the mandatory quota. This pattern of nomination raises questions about the depth of these parties’ commitment to the centrality and importance of full female participation in political and parliamentary life.

Figure: Detailed distribution of party affiliations among male and female candidates on the main electoral list of the ‘National List for Egypt’



The chart reveals variation in the level of party participation within the list, with the Future of the Nation Party leading by a total of 120 candidates, of whom 61 were women. The Protectors of the Nation Party ranked second with 54 candidates (including 27 women), followed by the National Front Party with 43 candidates (including 22 women).

The chart also indicates notable participation by other parties, most of which approached near gender parity in women’s representation. These include the Republican People’s Party (8 women out of 16 candidates), the Egyptian Social Democratic Party (4 women out of 9), as well as the Reform and Development Party, the Justice Party, and Independents, each with 4 women. By contrast, parties such

as the Generation's Will Party and the Future of Egypt Party recorded the lowest levels of participation, with only one candidate each and no female representation.

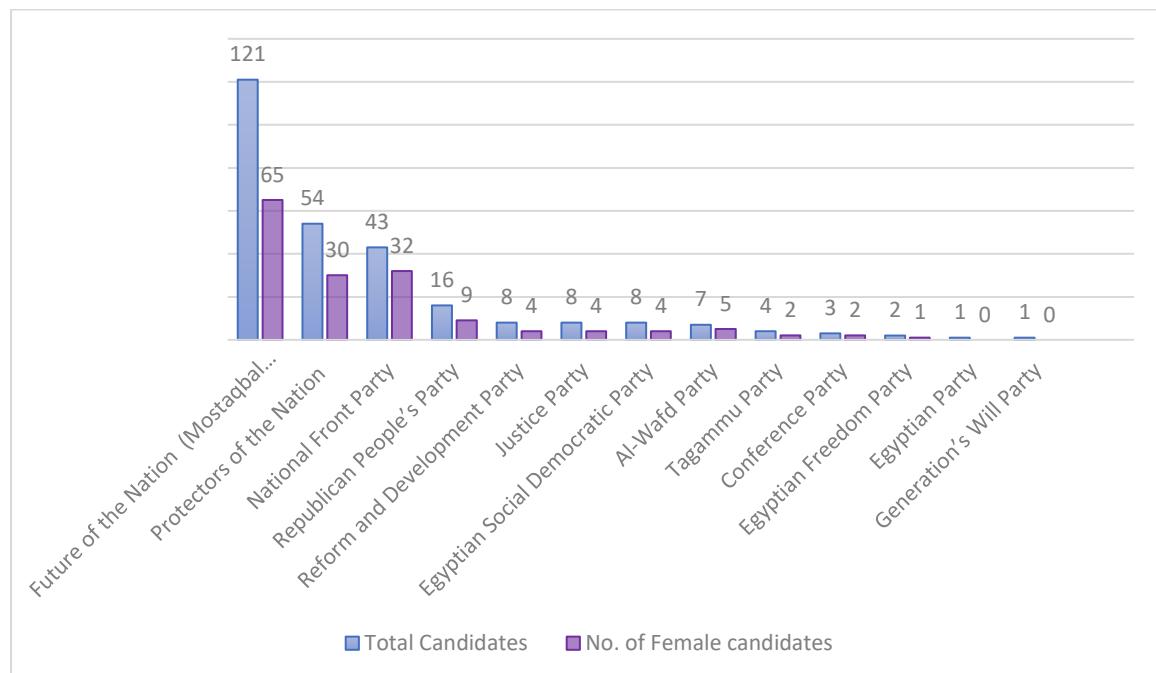
The total number of female candidates on the reserve list of the “National List for Egypt” reached 164 women, distributed across the four constituencies as follows:

- First constituency (Cairo and South & Central Delta sector): 61 women (51 required for a 102-seat constituency).
- Second constituency (North, Central, and South Upper Egypt sector): 58 women (51 required for a 102-seat constituency).
- Third constituency (East Delta sector): 22 women (20 required for a 40-seat constituency).
- Fourth constituency (West Delta sector): 23 women (20 required for a 40-seat constituency).

It is notable that this number exceeds the minimum required in each constituency, demonstrating that the parties forming the list do not face a shortage of qualified female cadres. However, this surplus in the reserve lists, contrasted with the strict adherence to the minimum in the main list, raises a fundamental question about the reasons behind not highlighting a larger number of qualified women in the main competitive front.

This approach can be interpreted as reflecting either a lack of priority for genuinely enhancing women's presence in leading positions, or a partial reluctance to exceed the legal minimum, despite the availability of qualified female candidates. This, in turn, raises deeper questions about the extent of these political forces' commitment to the spirit of women's political empowerment, and whether women's roles remain confined to formal compliance with legal provisions rather than being translated into actual practice that fully harnesses their capabilities and places them at the forefront.

Figure: Detailed distribution of party affiliations among male and female candidates on the reserve list of the 'National List for Egypt'



The chart shows the distribution of seats within the reserve list, where the major parties maintained their lead in terms of both the total number of candidates and women's representation. The Future

of the Nation Party tops the list with 121 candidates, including 65 women, followed by the Protectors of the Nation Party with 54 candidates, of whom 30 are women. The National Front Party also stands out for its high women's representation, with 32 women out of 43 candidates.

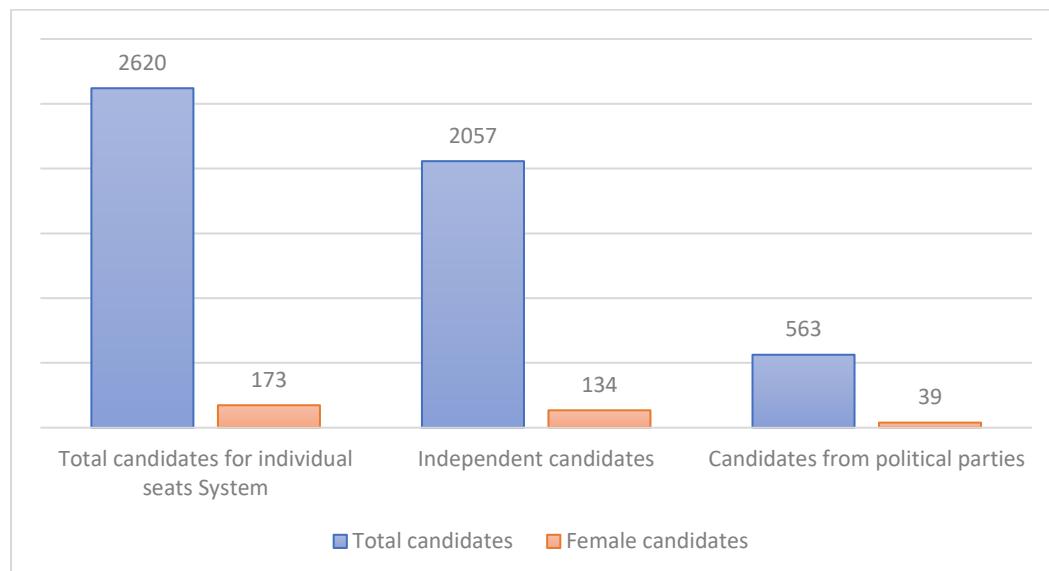
The data reveal a relative gender balance in other parties; the Republican People's Party fielded 9 women out of 16 candidates, while the Reform and Development Party, the Justice Party, and the Egyptian Social Democratic Party had an equal number of women and men (4 each). In contrast, parties such as the Egyptian Party and the Generation's Will Party had only one candidate each, with no female representation on the reserve list.

Second: Female Candidates in Individual Seats System

- The data on competition for individual seats in the House of Representatives elections show a clear dominance of male candidates, with only a marginal presence of women, as follows:
 - Total number of candidates: 2,620
 - Number of independent candidates: 2,057
 - Number of female candidates: only 173 (including 134 independents and 39 from political parties)
 - Women's representation: 6.6% of the total candidates
- Five governorates recorded a complete absence of female candidates, namely: Luxor, Port Said, South Sinai, North Sinai, and the Red Sea.
- Regarding the role of political parties:
 - Total number of parties participating in individual seats: 37, with a total of 563 candidates
 - Number of parties supporting female candidates: 20, with a total of 39 women
 - Number of parties not supporting any female candidates: 17

These figures reveal a clear gap in women's representation in individual-seat elections. Party support for women was limited to less than half of the participating parties, and female candidates were entirely absent in five governorates. This highlights the real challenges facing women's political participation, both geographically and in terms of party distribution.

Figure: Total number of female candidates for individual-seats System and their party affiliations.



The total number of political parties competing for individual seats in the House of Representatives elections is 37 parties, as follows:

Future of the Nation, Protectors of the Nation, National Front, Justice, Egyptian Social Democratic, Conference, Tagammu, Conservatives, Sons of Egypt, Constitution, Reform and Renaissance, Socialist Freedoms, Al-Wafd, Democratic Generation, Free Egyptians, Al-Ghad, Al-Nour, Modern Egypt, Generation's Will, Dignity, Human Rights and Citizenship, Republican People's, Voice of the People, Popular Socialist Alliance, Democratic Peace, Reform and Development, Future of Egypt, Egyptian Freedom, National Egypt, Call of Egypt, Democratic People, Egyptian National Movement, Awareness, Union, New Independents, Pioneering, Arab Democratic Nasserist.

The total number of political parties that supported female candidates for individual seats is 20 parties, as follows:

Future of the Nation, Justice, Egyptian Social Democratic, Conference, Conservatives, Protectors of the Nation, Sons of Egypt, Constitution, Reform and Renaissance, Socialist Freedoms, Al-Wafd, Al-Ghad, Generation's Will, Voice of the People, Democratic Peace, Reform and Development, National Egypt, Call of Egypt, Awareness, Union.

Women in the 2025 House of Representatives Elections: Outcomes and Trends

First: Electoral List System (Guaranteed Representation)

The list system achieved an absolute victory for the “National List for Egypt” in both phases, ensuring a consistent female presence as follows:

- Phase One: 71 women won seats (51 in Upper Egypt sector, 20 in West Delta sector).
- Phase Two: 71 women won seats, representing 50% of the total list seats (142 seats).

The list system remains the only mechanism to guarantee women's representation, as political parties adhered strictly to the legal minimum quota without exceeding it.

Second: Individual Seats (Challenges of Direct Competition)

The results revealed a sharp gap in individual-seat competition due to structural and sociocultural barriers:

- Phase One: Among 1,292 candidates (including 88 women), no woman won and none qualified for the first-round runoff.
- Phase Two: No female candidate won in the first round; only four women advanced to the runoff out of 202 candidates (2 independents, 1 from Protectors of the Nation, 1 from Justice).
- The National Elections Authority announced the victory of three women in the Phase Two runoff:
 1. Eman Salem Khidr, First District, Sharqia, representing Protectors of the Nation
 2. Marwa Mohamed Abdel Ghani, First District, Sharqia, Independent
 3. Sahar Ahmed Fikri Osman, Second District, Sharqia, representing Justice Party

Third: Re-run Constituencies by National Elections Authority Decisions and Judicial Rulings

The elections witnessed legal interventions leading to re-voting in several constituencies:

1. Phase One Re-run (National Elections Authority Decision No. 67 of 2025)
 - Scope: 19 constituencies in 7 governorates (Giza, Fayoum, Assiut, Sohag, Qena, Alexandria, Beheira)
 - Female participation: 31 women among 446 candidates (6.9%)
 - Result: 3 women advanced to the runoff
2. Re-run Constituencies (Supreme Administrative Court – NEA Decision No. 71 of 2025)
 - Scope: 30 constituencies in 10 governorates
 - Female participation: 41 women among 630 candidates
 - Result: According to NEA Decision No. 77 of 2025, no woman won and none advanced to the runoff

Fourth: Party Affiliation of Women Candidates in Re-run Constituencies

- Independents: The largest share, 60 women
- Political Parties: The remaining nominations were distributed among parties with one or more female candidates:
Future of the Nation, Reform and Renaissance, Conference, Justice, Democratic Peace, National Egypt, Egyptian Social Democratic, Al-Wafd, and Generation's Will.

Conclusion and General Findings on Women's Representation in the 2025 Parliament

The outcomes of the 2025 electoral process for both the Senate and the House of Representatives revealed a clear paradox in the trajectory of women's political empowerment. While the party-list system remains the only effective and reliable mechanism ensuring women's presence in parliament, the fact that the sole competing list confined itself to the legal minimum required for women's representation raises fundamental questions about the extent to which political parties are genuinely convinced of women's leadership role, beyond mere mandatory legal compliance.

In contrast to this quota-based guaranteed representation, the results of the individual seat elections were markedly weak: only three women won seats out of a total of 173 female candidates contesting individual seats in the House of Representatives elections. This persistent failure underscores the existence of deep-rooted structural and societal challenges—most notably the dominance of political money and the influence of traditional patronage and tribal networks—which continue to obstruct women's access to parliamentary seats through individual electoral competition.

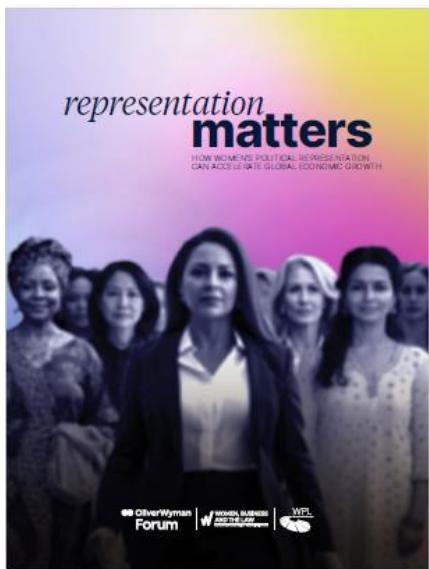
These findings highlight the urgent need for rigorous analysis of electoral gaps and the development of comprehensive national strategies to dismantle structural barriers, ensuring that women's representation moves beyond being a mere legal entitlement to becoming a political reality grounded in equal opportunities and genuine competitiveness across all electoral systems.

From Parliamentary Representation to Comprehensive Development: Missing Economic Dimensions:

The outcomes of Egypt's 2025 electoral process—and the challenges they revealed regarding women's access to individual seats and the confinement of their representation to legally mandated quotas—call for a deeper perspective that goes beyond mere numerical presence under the parliamentary dome. In this context, the study "Representation Matters: How Women's Political Representation Can

Accelerate Global Economic Growth”¹² gains particular significance. The study affirms that gender equality in decision-making positions is not simply a social entitlement or a moral imperative, but rather a core driver of economic growth and sustainable prosperity.

First: The Current Situation and Economic Stakes



Despite women making up half of the world’s population, they enjoy fewer legal rights, their labor force participation rate is less than two-thirds that of men, and they earn only 80% of men’s income. At a time when global growth is slowing—expected to persist at an average rate of 2.7%—the world is in urgent need of new economic drivers. At the current pace of progress, achieving gender parity could take more than 100 years.

The economic stakes are significant: closing the gender gap in employment rates could increase global GDP by more than 20% and double the global growth rate over the next decade. The International Monetary Fund estimates that this could boost GDP by up to 23% in developing and emerging economies, underscoring that expanding women’s empowerment is not only a matter of fairness, but also a “smart economics” choice for governments and societies alike.

Second: The Relationship Between Political Representation and Legal Gains

The research provides empirical evidence of a positive and statistically significant correlation between increased representation of women in legislative and ministerial positions and improvements in gender legal equality, as measured by the Women, Business and the Law (WBL) index. This correlation is stronger in countries where legislatures have greater lawmaking authority, indicating that the institutional context plays a pivotal role in enabling women to effect policy change. Moreover, higher levels of women’s representation are associated with stronger laws protecting women from domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace—an especially critical finding given the low level of legal protection globally in this area (the WBL Safety score stands at 36%).

Third: Challenges and Barriers (Bias and Underrepresentation)

Women continue to be significantly underrepresented, with their global share of legislative and ministerial seats still standing at approximately 23%–26%, and parity is not expected to be achieved for 40 years or more. This challenge reflects deeply rooted societal bias: the United Nations Development Programme’s Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) reveals that 9 out of 10 people hold biases against women, and 49% believe that men make better political leaders. Such bias results in limited financial support for women’s electoral campaigns and increases their exposure to violence—particularly psychological violence—thereby undermining their political participation and effectiveness.

¹² Women Political Leaders (WPL), Oliver Wyman Forum, & World Bank Group. (2025). Representation matters: How women's political representation can accelerate global economic growth. Oliver Wyman Forum chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.oliverwymanforum.com/content/dam/oliver-wyman/ow-forum/equal-societies/Representation-Matters-Report-2025.pdf

Fourth: A Call to Action (Four Pillars for Transformation)

The study emphasizes that meaningful change requires a concerted effort across sectors and calls for a focus on four key pillars:

1. Creating Equal Opportunities for Women in Political Life:

Governments and political parties must take practical measures to ensure that women have equal opportunities to run for office, win elections, and hold positions of power. This includes adopting proven mechanisms such as gender quotas, term limits, and anti-harassment legislation to protect women in the political arena, as well as providing quality care services to reduce the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work borne by women.

2. Reforming Discriminatory Laws and Removing Regulatory Barriers:

Governments should accelerate reforms of laws that hinder women's economic opportunities, particularly those related to safety and family leave. These reforms should be evidence-based, relying on comprehensive data to identify priorities, and carried out in collaboration with civil society and gender experts. This also requires investment in gender-responsive training for public officials to ensure the sustainability of progress.

3. Collective Action to Address Social Bias:

Given the deeply rooted nature of gender bias, governments and the private sector must work together to confront it—especially bias against women's leadership capabilities. This can be achieved through education to reduce bias (particularly among younger generations), the development of policies that promote equality, and the use of media messaging that normalizes women's leadership and avoids gender stereotyping.

4. Leveraging Private-Sector Influence to Advance Equality:

The private sector has an equally critical role to play by using its influence and platforms to publicly advocate for greater women's political representation and to invest in women's political participation. Most importantly, it should lead by example within organizations by adopting standards that exceed legal requirements to promote equality—such as pay transparency, flexible work arrangements, encouragement of paternity leave—and by setting targets to increase women's representation in leadership positions.

Women on Corporate Boards

The 2024 Annual Report of the Egyptian Women on Boards Observatory, issued by the School of Business, The American University in Cairo, monitors women's representation on corporate boards and in senior leadership positions. The report includes gender-disaggregated data from approximately 1,000 companies and banks, comprising: 237 publicly listed companies, 33 banks, 660 non-banking financial sector companies, and 73 public sector companies (holding and subsidiary companies). The report tracks a range of indicators, including:

- The index recorded a 24.3% representation, marking a 1% increase compared to 2023. With a growth rate of 4.7%, the overall women-on-boards index has more than doubled over the past five years, rising from 10% in 2019 to 24.3%, reaching its highest level in 2024.



- In 2024, the pace of women joining corporate boards slightly slowed, with the annual increase standing at 1%, compared to an average annual growth of 3% over the past few years. This slowdown, noted in the 2024 annual monitoring report, is expected to pave the way for further interventions and initiatives aimed at increasing women's appointments to boards, thereby improving gender diversity ratios in the coming years.
- The non-banking financial sector continues to lead in terms of the number of companies and the proportion and number of women on boards. Women's representation in boards within this sector advanced by 1.2% in 2024, reaching 26.4%, up from 25.2% in 2023. The non-banking financial sector remains the closest to achieving the 30% women-on-boards target by 2030, followed by Egyptian Exchange-listed companies at 22%, the banking sector at 18.8%, and finally public sector companies at 12.2%. This indicates that, aside from the non-banking financial sector—which experienced a 4.8% growth rate—no substantial changes occurred in women's representation across other sectors.
- The number of companies and banks with no female representation on boards has declined significantly in recent years, thanks to regulations and initiatives mandating women's inclusion on boards of banks, listed companies, and firms under the Financial Regulatory Authority. Conversely, the number of companies and banks with two women on their boards has increased with the successful implementation of these measures. On average, about one-half to two-thirds of the banking sector, listed companies, and Financial Regulatory Authority firms now have at least two women on their boards. Notably, firms under the Financial Regulatory Authority have already achieved the 2030 target of 30% women on boards, with 39% of these companies reaching 30% representation in 2024, totaling 270 companies compared to 227 in 2023.

Key Overall Findings for 2024

- **24.3%:** The women-on-boards index reached 24.3% in 2024, following a positive growth rate of 4.7%, compared to 23.3% in 2023.
- **1,638 women:** The total number of women on corporate and bank boards reached 1,638 in 2024, with a growth rate of 5% compared to 1,563 women in 2023.
- **402 women:** The overall gap to achieve the 2030 strategy target is estimated at 402 women. This includes: 156 women in Egyptian Exchange-listed companies, 36 women in the banking sector, 54 women in public sector companies, and 156 women in the non-banking financial sector who need to join boards by 2030.
- **+67 women:** The estimated annual gap is 67 women who need to be appointed to boards to meet the 2030 strategy target, distributed as follows: 26 women in listed companies, 6 women in the banking sector, 9 women in public sector companies, and 21 women in the non-banking financial sector.

Women on Boards of Companies and Banks by Sector, 2024

Sector	Number of Companies	Women on Boards	Men on Boards	Total Board Members	Women's Share
Egyptian Exchange-listed Companies	236	434	1,537	1,971	22%
Banking Sector	33	60	259	319	18.8%
Non-Banking Financial Sector	665	1,140	3,178	4,318	26.4%

Public Sector Companies	67	39	281	320	12.2%
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Insights from the 2024 Data on Women in Corporate and Bank Boards

1. **Non-Banking Financial Sector Leads**
 - This sector has the largest number of companies (665) and the highest total number of board members (4,318).
 - It also achieves the highest women's representation at 26.4%, indicating that efforts to empower women in this sector are the most effective among all sectors surveyed.
2. **Strong Performance of Egyptian Exchange-listed Companies**
 - The Egyptian Exchange ranks second in women's representation at 22%.
 - Despite having fewer companies than the non-banking financial sector, it maintains a good representation rate, with 434 women out of 1,971 board members.
3. **Challenges in the Banking Sector**
 - Women's representation in the banking sector is 18.8%, lower than the averages in both the Exchange and non-banking financial sectors.
 - Given the economic and financial importance of this sector, there is a need for focused initiatives to diversify boards. The sector also has the smallest number of companies (33) and total board members (319).
4. **Public Sector Faces the Greatest Challenge**
 - The public sector shows the lowest women's representation at just 12.2%.
 - This sharp gap highlights significant challenges in implementing diversity and inclusion policies for female leadership, requiring major reform interventions to increase women's participation.

International Experiences in Promoting Gender Diversity on Boards – Insights from the Egyptian Women on Boards Observatory

A. Use of Quotas and Targets

- Many countries have implemented gender quotas, ranging from a single woman to up to 40% of board seats, with various application methods.
- Penalties for non-compliance exist in most countries with quota systems, though they differ in form. For example, in Belgium, France, Portugal, India, and Italy, companies may face fines, dissolution, or restrictions on paying executive salaries if they fail to comply.
- Many companies have introduced targets within their corporate governance codes, often under a “comply or explain” framework, typically set higher than the legal quotas. Some jurisdictions have established targets of 40% or more, while others recommend at least 25–33% women on boards.

B. Complementary Initiatives to Enhance Gender Diversity on Boards

Implementing additional measures alongside quotas or targets—such as government networks, sector-specific programs, and listing rules—has proven effective in increasing gender diversity on boards.

For instance, Australia is among the few pioneering countries to achieve 30% gender diversity in its top 100 boards without legally mandated quotas, reaching this milestone prior to its official 30% target in 2018. This success is largely attributed to efforts by government networks, including the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, and various industry initiatives.

Complementary initiatives include government networks, industry sector programs, and relevant listing rules.

Another approach emphasizes developing diverse pathways to support advancement:

- In Spain, the “Promociona” program launched by the Employers’ Organizations Union in 2013 seeks to enhance women’s professional and leadership skills, fostering their representation in senior positions by identifying and nurturing talent.
- In Portugal, the Institute of Corporate Governance revised its corporate governance code in 2020 to recommend that companies adopt criteria for appointing new board members, with special emphasis on gender diversity.

Further initiatives by both the public and private sectors include advocacy and awareness campaigns:

- In Saudi Arabia, guidelines were issued to companies detailing mechanisms for nominating women, while the Capital Market Authority and the Women’s Empowerment Authority developed programs to raise awareness about the importance of board diversity and support women’s inclusion in boards.

C. Encouraging Companies to Accelerate Gender Diversity

- Companies can adopt measures to create a more supportive environment for women’s advancement into leadership positions. For example, some governments have sought to stimulate progress by highlighting excellence in gender equality practices in the private sector through tools such as certifications, memoranda of understanding, awards, and standards.
- On the other hand, companies themselves can implement practices to enhance women’s talent pipelines, such as establishing diversity and inclusion committees, designing gender-focused recruitment practices, and adopting promotion and retention policies and processes, in addition to offering training, mentoring, and networking programs.

Section Two: Economic and Social Rights

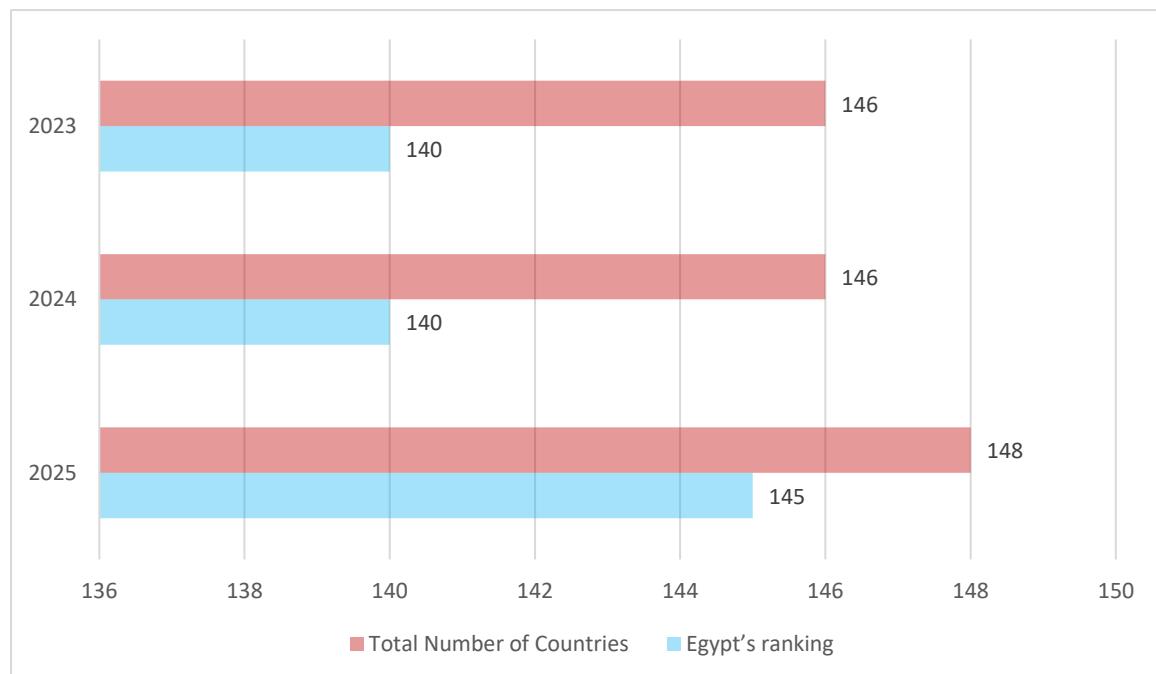
According to the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report issued by the World Economic Forum, Egypt recorded a notable decline in the “Economic Participation and Opportunity” index, ranking 145th out of 148 countries. This position reflects a deterioration compared to previous years, as Egypt had ranked 140th out of 146 countries in 2023 and 2024.

An analysis of the sub-indicators for 2025 provides further details on this ranking:

- Labor force participation: Egypt ranked 144th, confirming the persistent large gap in women’s economic engagement.
- Wage equality: Egypt maintained a relative strength, ranking 27th in “equal pay for equal work.”
- Professional and leadership representation: Egypt lagged significantly in women’s professional empowerment, ranking 130th in “legislators, senior officials, and managers,” and 117th in “professional and technical workers.”

This decline (from 140th to 145th) indicates a widening gender economic gap in Egypt over the past year, highlighting the need for more effective policies to integrate women into the labor market and enhance their access to leadership positions.

Egypt's ranking in the **Economic Participation and Opportunity** index over three years (according to the Global Gender Gap Report) can be summarized as follows:



Note: The higher a country's ranking number, the worse the situation within that country.

Given this decline in global indicators, there is an urgent need for action—not merely as a social entitlement, but as a critical economic necessity. World Bank data indicate that closing the gender gap in employment could boost Egypt's economy by a staggering 56%.

Despite this immense untapped developmental potential, the statistical reality is stark: women's participation in the workforce currently stands at only about 18%. This glaring discrepancy between the anticipated economic gains and the actual situation, as highlighted in the Global Gender Gap Report, underscores that ensuring women have equal access to employment opportunities cannot be achieved through legislation alone. It requires a fundamental shift in mindset, both socially and within the private sector work environment.

The challenge of women's economic participation does not stop at traditional work models; it extends to rapidly evolving global trends toward sustainability. As the world shifts toward a green economy, new barriers to gender justice emerge. According to an IMF report titled *"Green Jobs and the Future of Work for Women and Men,"* while men occupy roughly 70% of globally polluting jobs—making them more vulnerable to job losses during the transition to a green economy—the analysis also shows that women are similarly at risk of significant losses during this transition.

The main issue lies in the underrepresentation of women in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), which are critical for future green jobs. Green jobs are those that improve environmental sustainability or reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Key points regarding the gender gap in green jobs:

- **Gender gap in employment:** In advanced economies, only 6% of working women hold green jobs, compared to more than 20% of working men. This gap is even larger in emerging and developing economies.
- **Wage premium:** Green jobs carry a significant wage premium over other jobs in the economy, even after controlling for education and experience. For example, in Colombia, the wage premium is 9% for men but 16% for women, meaning women are missing out on higher-income opportunities.
- **Educational gap:** Women make up less than one-third of STEM graduates in many countries, leaving them underqualified to take advantage of the upcoming green job boom.

Implications of this gap include:

- **Exacerbation of inequality:** Without targeted interventions, the green transition could widen the gender gap in the labor market, as green jobs are among the fastest-growing sectors.
- **Economic and environmental impact:** Gender gaps affect the effectiveness of climate policies. Countries with a higher share of STEM-qualified workers and stronger gender equality policies achieve larger reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (by 2–4 percentage points). STEM education drives green innovation and equips workers with the necessary skills for sustainable jobs.

The report offered a set of solutions and recommendations for policymakers, including:

1. Closing the educational gap: through:

- Providing incentives for women to study STEM fields.
- Early exposure to these fields, especially for girls.
- Offering mentorship programs.
- Strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors.
- Revising curricula to address gender differences and providing specialized training for teachers.

2. Supporting broader economic participation of women: through:

- Reducing barriers in the labor market.
- Improving access to financing.
- Reforming legal frameworks.
- Increasing women's representation on corporate boards.

The report concluded that the path toward a sustainable economy must be inclusive. The greater the contribution of both men and women to the green transition and its benefits, the better it will be for everyone. Closing this gap not only promotes justice but also accelerates and enhances the effectiveness of the green transition itself.

Applying this global perspective to the Egyptian context makes the warning even more urgent. With Egypt's ranking in the Economic Participation and Opportunity Index dropping to 145 in 2025, and women facing weak representation in technical sectors (ranked 117), the risk of their marginalization in the green labor market poses a real threat to the national economy.

The current participation gap (18%), combined with insufficient preparedness for future job requirements, could result in a lost growth opportunity estimated by the World Bank at 56%. Therefore, safeguarding women's economic rights in Egypt goes beyond providing traditional employment opportunities; it must also ensure their access to technical training and upskilling to secure their place at the core of the green transition.

The image shows the cover of an ILO Brief. The cover is blue and white. At the top left is the ILO logo. At the top right is the text 'ILO Brief'. Below the logo, the title 'Promoting gender equality through responsible business conduct: the role of business' is written. Below the title, there is a section titled 'Key points' with two bullet points. The first bullet point discusses the brief's aim to highlight responsible business conduct for gender equality. The second bullet point discusses its complementarity to the first brief in the series, which explores government roles in promoting gender equality in the workplace.

In this context, the responsibility for driving change and integrating women into the labor market does not rest solely with government policies; it extends to the private sector as a key partner. The ILO's bulletin, *"Promoting Gender Equality through Responsible Business Conduct: The Role of the Business Sector,"*¹³ highlights the pivotal role of businesses—both private and public—in advancing gender equality and economically empowering women in the workforce through the adoption and implementation of responsible business practices.

The main challenge facing women's economic empowerment is that progress toward gender equality in the labor market has stalled for over 20 years, with persistent gaps in wages and leadership opportunities. These challenges were further

exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Barriers Facing Women:

1. **Structural Gaps:** Women earn 20% less than men, have lower representation in leadership positions, and are concentrated in informal sectors and low-wage jobs.
2. **Unequal Care Burden:** Women spend three times more time on unpaid care work compared to men.
3. **Violence and Bias:** Increased exposure to workplace violence and harassment.
4. **Cultural Barriers:** Stereotypes and societal mindsets limit career advancement opportunities.

Key Action Areas for the Business Sector and Supporting Examples: The bulletin highlights five key areas where organizations can drive transformative change to promote gender equality and economically empower women.

1. **Ensuring Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value:** Companies must guarantee equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of gender. This requires strong leadership commitment, social dialogue, collective bargaining, measuring the gender pay gap, conducting gender-neutral job evaluations, and ensuring pay transparency and reporting.

Examples:

- o IKEA, a member of EPIC, committed to a 50:50 gender balance at all levels and units, with annual assessments and public reporting.

¹³ International Labour Organization (ILO). Promoting Gender Equality Through Responsible Business Conduct: The Role of Business (ILO Brief). February 2025. Geneva: International Labour Organization. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/promoting-gender-equality-through-responsible-business-conduct-role-0>

- The Body Shop launched the *Community Fair Trade* program to ensure equal pay for work of equal value for workers in its supply chains (e.g., sesame and shea suppliers).

2. **Preventing and Eliminating Workplace Violence and Harassment:** Companies must demonstrate leadership commitment by adopting and implementing comprehensive zero-tolerance workplace policies on violence and harassment, in consultation with employees and their representatives. This includes integrating physical, psychological, and social risk assessments into occupational health and safety management, identifying and assessing risks, and providing accessible training and information.

Examples:

- HBL, Pakistan's largest bank, implemented an anti-harassment policy allowing anonymous reporting for employees at all levels.
- Unilever supports suppliers in establishing effective systems to prevent, detect, and address violence and harassment across its supply chains, including independent reviews and corrective measures in Kenyan tea farms.

3. **Promoting Work-Life Balance and Equal Sharing of Care Responsibilities:** Since unpaid care work hinders women's labor market participation, organizations should implement non-discrimination and work-life balance policies. This includes generous maternity and health protections, preventing discrimination against employees with family responsibilities, paid paternity leave, breastfeeding support, subsidized childcare, and flexible work arrangements.

Examples:

- L'Oréal launched the *Share & Care* program offering at least 14 weeks of fully paid maternity leave globally.
- Fujitsu Japan provides 14 weeks of paid paternity leave and remote work policies.
- Red Land Roses Ltd (Kenya) opened an on-site daycare center, reducing unplanned leave and increasing productivity.

4. **Supporting Women's Equal Participation in Decision-Making and Leadership:** Companies should set clear targets for promoting women into managerial positions and improve gender balance across leadership levels. This requires leadership commitment, talent diversification, succession planning, transparent communication, and promotion of women's entrepreneurship and gender-responsive procurement.

Examples:

- Deutsche Post DHL Group implements the *Women in Management* program to foster an inclusive culture and gender equality in leadership.
- East African Breweries Ltd (EABL) introduced a *Diversity & Inclusion Framework* to increase women's representation in boards and senior management, adopting 50:50 hiring policies for all roles and expanding similar targets to suppliers.

5. **Building a Work Future that Works for Women:** With emerging technologies, digitization, and climate change, companies should ensure women benefit from evolving jobs. This includes lifelong learning (acquire/retrain/upskill), facilitating access for women and girls to STEM fields, promoting financial inclusion, preventing new technologies from reinforcing stereotypes, and supporting women entrepreneurs in the gig economy.

Examples:

- Intel Malaysia established a Women Leadership Development Advisory Board to increase career advancement opportunities and runs the *Women in Intel* network mentoring girls in STEM education.
- Ferrero launched the *Cocoa Action Plan*, helping create savings and loan associations to enhance women's financial inclusion in rural areas.

Reviewing these five areas and the practices of leading global companies provides the Egyptian business sector—both public and private—with a practical model to address the challenges identified

in the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report. For Egypt, these practices are not a matter of corporate luxury but direct solutions to three critical issues:

1. **Addressing the wage gap:** With the wage gap in Egypt estimated at 689 EGP, companies can adopt pay transparency and gender-neutral job evaluations, following the example set by IKEA.
2. **Improving economic participation:** With women's labor force participation at only 18%, initiatives such as caregiving economy support, provision of childcare centers, and flexible work arrangements—successfully implemented by Kenyan companies like Red Land Roses in similar environments—can significantly enhance participation.
3. **Securing women's place in the economy of the future:** Mentorship programs in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) are essential to prevent Egyptian women from remaining at 117th globally in technical occupations.

Transitioning business practices in Egypt from mere legal compliance to comprehensive social and gender responsibility is the only way to convert the lost growth opportunity—estimated at 56% of GDP—into tangible reality. Without private sector adoption of zero-tolerance policies toward workplace violence and harassment, and without fostering family-friendly work environments, the gender gap in Egypt will remain stagnant, regardless of the quality of government policies.

Women and the Education System: Pathways of the Gap from Foundation to Specialization

Education represents the primary determinant of a woman's quality of life and her ability to claim her rights. Therefore, analyzing the educational status of Egyptian women requires examining the entire educational trajectory—from the challenge of illiteracy, through pre-university education, to higher education. This progression reveals how the gender gap forms over time and how the outcomes of each stage impact women's economic and social opportunities.

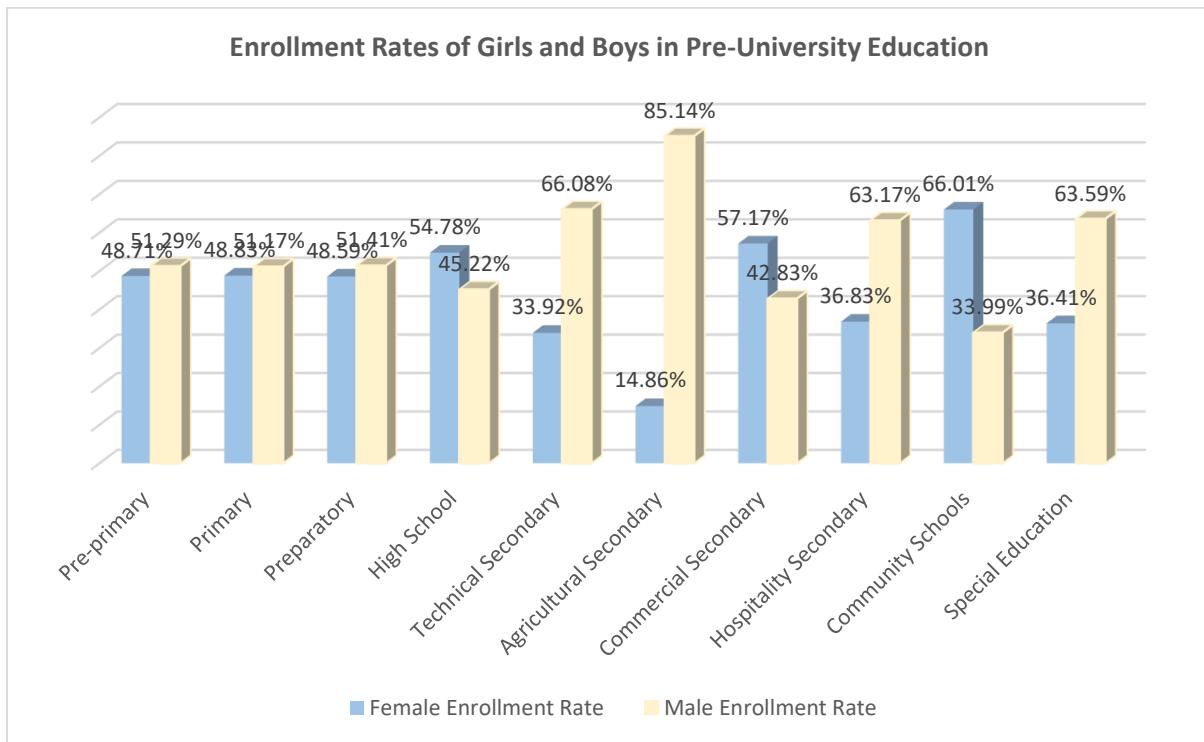
1. The Challenge of Illiteracy (The Foundational Gap): Data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) for 2024 indicates that gender disparities in literacy rates persist. Female illiteracy remains significantly higher than male illiteracy, at 21.4% for women compared to just 12% for men. This highlights a fundamental challenge at the base of the educational pyramid, limiting the ability of a large segment of women to be aware of their rights or to participate fully in the formal economy.

2. Pre-University Education: CAPMAS¹⁴ data shows that, in terms of numbers, the distribution of students across pre-university education appears balanced. However, it also reveals early occupational stereotyping in technical education, signaling the beginning of gendered pathways that may shape future career choices and opportunities.

Educational Stage	Girls	% Girls	Boys	% Boys	Total Stage
Pre-primary	616,944	48.71%	649,973	51.29%	1,266,917
Primary	6,656,472	48.83%	6,969,930	51.17%	13,626,402
Preparatory	2,981,330	48.59%	3,155,371	51.41%	6,136,701
General Secondary	1,226,251	54.78%	1,012,896	45.22%	2,239,147
Industrial Secondary	346,071	33.92%	674,751	66.08%	1,020,822
Agricultural Secondary	36,350	14.86%	208,269	85.14%	244,619

¹⁴ Egypt in Numbers – Education Section (March 2025) – Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)- https://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/StaticPages.aspx?page_id=5035

Commercial Secondary	492,215	57.17%	369,263	42.83%	861,478
Hotel Management Secondary	26,689	36.83%	45,775	63.17%	72,464
Community Schools	94,038	66.01%	48,366	33.99%	142,404
Special Education	17,100	36.41%	29,894	63.59%	46,994
Total	12,493,460	48.68%	13,164,488	51.32%	25,657,948



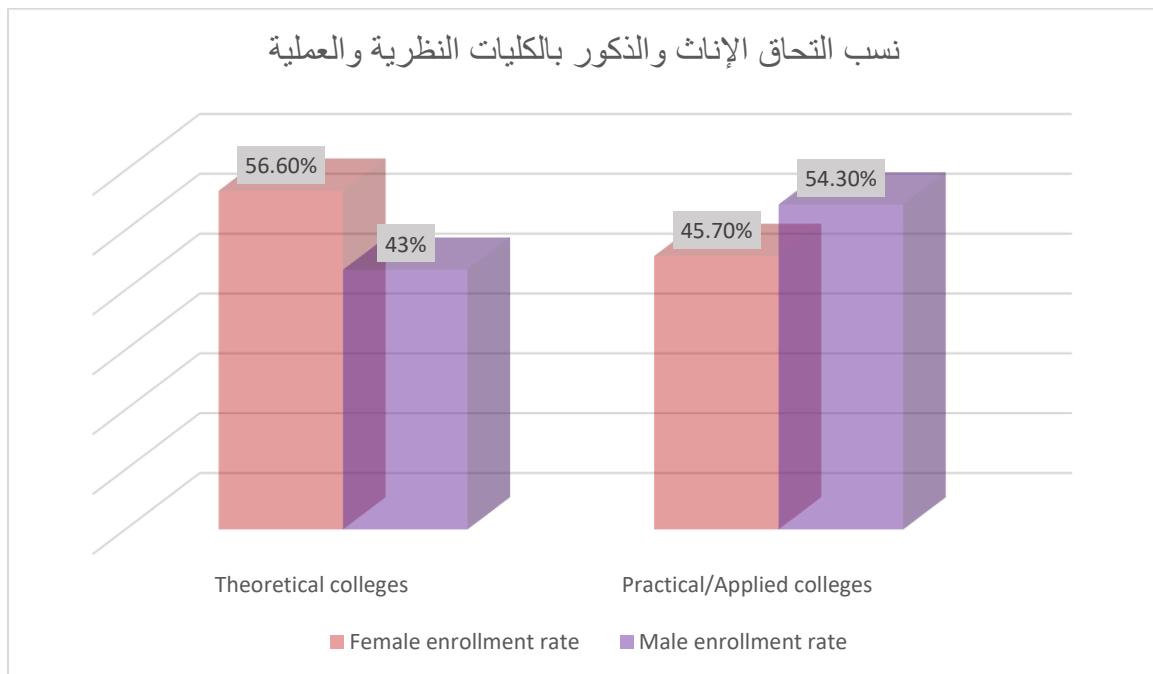
Analytical Findings:

- Equality in Enrollment:** The figures show a high balance in compulsory education (around 48.7% girls), indicating the success of accessibility policies.
- Academic Excellence:** There is a clear tendency for girls toward the academic track (general secondary at 54.78%), while boys are more inclined toward technical education or early entry into the labor market.
- Occupational Stereotyping in Technical Education:** A significant gender gap is evident in agricultural secondary education (85% boys) and industrial secondary (66% boys), compared to female dominance in commercial secondary (57%), which later channels them predominantly into administrative and office work.
- Developmental Role of Community Schools:** Girls make up two-thirds of enrollments in community schools, highlighting their crucial role in reducing dropout rates among girls in remote areas.

Third: University Education (Academic Year 2023/2024)

According to data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) released in August 2025, numerical balance between genders continues at the university level, but significant gaps remain in the choice of fields of study:

- **Total Enrolled Students:** 3.8 million students (50.4% male, 49.6% female).
- **University Distribution:** Governmental and Al-Azhar universities remain the main providers of higher education (2.4 million students), while private and non-governmental universities play a limited role (385.9 thousand students).
- **Faculty Gap (Governmental Universities):**
 - **Theoretical Faculties:** Comprise 72.7% of students, with females outperforming males (56.6% vs. 43.4%).
 - **Practical/Applied Faculties:** Males account for 54.3% versus 45.7% females, explaining the low representation of women in technical and STEM disciplines.
- **Post-Secondary Technical Institutes:** Females hold the majority with 55.3%.



Final Analytical Insights:

The data confirm that in Egypt, the main obstacle is no longer "access to university education" but rather the "type of specialization." Female students are concentrated in theoretical and humanities faculties, which later contributes to wage gaps (as noted in the economic section) and weak representation in technical and green jobs (ranked 117 globally). This underscores the need for incentive policies to integrate girls into practical and technical fields starting from secondary education.

The impact of educational stereotyping does not end at graduation; it extends to access to specialized and critical job opportunities. Within the framework of analyzing women's economic and social rights, the 2024 data on female representation among experts at the Ministry of Justice reveal a clear economic participation gap: women make up only 34.9% of all experts. This percentage varies significantly across specializations, reaching a high of 41.6% in accounting and dropping to a low of 23.2% in agricultural fields. This indicates structural and social barriers that hinder women's equitable participation in specialized professional fields.

Specialization	Total	Male	% Male	Female	% Female
Engineering Experts	739	469	63.5%	270	36.5%
Accounting Experts	842	492	58.4%	350	41.6%
Agricultural Experts	585	449	76.8%	136	23.2%
Total	2166	1410	65.1%	756	34.9%

The data from the previous table highlights the following points:

1. **Male dominance:** The expert sector is generally male-dominated, with roughly a 2-to-1 ratio of men to women.
2. **Most balanced specialization:** Accounting is the closest to gender balance, suggesting a relatively more open field for female participation.
3. **Least balanced specialization:** Agriculture has the lowest female representation, raising questions about the social, educational, or professional factors influencing this disparity.
4. **Relative size:** Accounting is the largest specialization, followed by Engineering, then Agriculture.

These figures in the Experts Authority point back to a fundamental issue: the need to break gender stereotypes in both technical and higher education. The low percentage of women among agricultural experts (23.2%) mirrors the low female enrollment in agricultural secondary education (14.8%) mentioned earlier. This connection confirms that labor market disparities are cumulative, beginning in the classroom.

Women and the Labor Market: Analysis of Employment and Unemployment Indicators



Source: Annual Bulletin of the Labor Force Survey (2024), Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), Egypt.

Labor market indicators are the true mirror reflecting the success of development policies in integrating women into the economic cycle. By tracking employment and unemployment rates and examining gender gaps in labor force participation, we can assess the challenges facing Egyptian women in achieving financial independence and contributing to GDP. The latest official data for 2024/2025 reveals the following picture:

Labor Force and Unemployment Indicators for 2024: According to data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)¹⁵, released in April 2025:

- **Labor Force:** The total labor force reached 32.041 million individuals, of which 26.080 million were men, while women accounted for only 5.961 million.
- **Economic Participation Rate:** The gender gap is striking; male participation stood at 70.3%, compared to just 16.9% for women. This means that men's participation rate is more than four times that of women.
- **Unemployment Challenge:** Although the overall unemployment rate declined to 6.6%, there is a stark disparity: male unemployment is 4.2%, while female unemployment is significantly higher at 17.1%.

The following table shows the estimated number of employed persons in Egypt in 2024, classified by employment type and gender:

Employment Type	Males	Females	Total
Paid employment	18,409,400	3,337,800	21,747,300
Employer (runs own business and employs others)	980,000	52,400	1,032,400
Self-employed (without hiring others)	5,143,300	714,800	5,858,100
Working in family business without pay	455,900	834,000	1,289,900
Total	24,988,600	4,939,000	29,927,600

Analytical Highlights:

1. **Persistent Male Dominance:** Men constitute 83.5% of the total employed population in Egypt, while women account for only 16.5%, reinforcing the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report findings on the limited economic opportunities available to Egyptian women.
2. **Feminization of Unpaid Work:** The category of "working in a family business without pay" presents the most striking paradox: women form the majority (64.7%) in this segment. This directly relates to caregiving work, where women's energy is spent on family-serving tasks without financial return or social protection.
3. **Limited Female Entrepreneurship:** The data reveal a sharp leadership gap; women occupying the role of "employer" represent only 5.1%. This underscores the need for a supportive work

¹⁵ Annual Labor Force Survey (2024). Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), Egypt, <https://censusinfo.capmas.gov.eg/metadata-ar-v4.2/index.php/catalog/1927>

environment that facilitates access to financing and leadership positions, as highlighted in the ILO report.

4. **Concentration in Wage Employment:** Although wage work represents the largest employment category (72.7%), women's share remains low (15.3%), indicating persistent barriers preventing women from accessing stable formal-sector jobs.

Conclusion: These figures clearly explain why Egypt ranks 145th globally in economic participation. The crisis is not only in the “quantity of jobs” but also in the “quality of women’s participation,” which is concentrated in either high unemployment or unpaid family work, resulting in a lost growth opportunity estimated at 56% of GDP.

The Wage Gap: Income Disparities and the “Occupational Segregation” Dilemma

The challenges facing women in the labor market go beyond low participation rates to include significant disparities in monetary returns. According to the Annual Bulletin of Employment, Wages, and Working Hours published by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)¹⁶, there is a wage gap of EGP 689 per month in favor of men. The average monthly wage for men in June 2023 was EGP 5,128, while the average monthly cash earnings for women in the same occupations during the same period amounted to EGP 4,439.

The following table presents the average monthly wages of women and men across different economic activities in June 2023, along with the calculated difference in average wages between genders for each sector:

Economic Activity	Average Monthly Wage (Men, EGP)	Average Monthly Wage (Women, EGP)	Difference (EGP)	Higher For
Total	5128	4439	689	Men
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	3374	2835	539	Men
Mining and Quarrying	7851	6706	1145	Men
Manufacturing	4637	3992	645	Men
Electricity, Gas, Steam, AC Supply	13181	14615	1434	Women
Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management	6839	7496	657	Women
Construction	7256	8017	761	Women
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Vehicles	3898	3321	577	Men
Transport and Storage	4560	7773	3213	Women
Accommodation and Food Services	3793	3553	240	Men
Information and Communication	18665	20646	1981	Women
Financial Intermediation and Insurance	13654	8993	4661	Men
Real Estate Activities	3469	2846	623	Men

¹⁶ Annual Bulletin of Employment, Wages, and Working Hours 2023 (October 2024). Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). <https://www.capmas.gov.eg/publications/15>

Professional, Scientific, Technical Activities	6275	4729	1546	Men
Administrative and Support Services	3975	3773	202	Men
Education	3764	2976	788	Men
Human Health and Social Work Activities	4997	3108	1889	Men
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3319	2681	638	Men
Other Service Activities	3187	3128	59	Men

Key findings based on official data:

- **Male dominance in wages:** Men earn higher wages in 13 out of 18 economic sectors.
- Severe wage gaps: The largest gender wage disparity appears in the financial intermediation sector, with a gap of EGP 4,661 in favor of men, followed by the health and technical activities sectors.
- **The paradox of gendered sectors:** Women earn higher wages in only five sectors (such as communications and transport). This advantage is often linked to women holding specialized administrative roles or working in large companies that adhere to international standards, rather than reflecting broad-based female representation across these sectors.

This raises a fundamental question about the underlying causes of such disparities. Answers are provided by the study “Occupational Segregation and the Gender Wage Gap in Egypt”¹⁷ issued by the Economic Research Forum, which examines the structural drivers behind women’s persistently low labor force participation and enduring gender wage gaps in Egypt between 1998 and 2023. The study concludes that these patterns are partly attributable to the systematic downsizing of public sector employment and the channeling of women into lower-paid sectors and occupations.

Key Findings:

1. Low female economic participation

- Women’s labor force participation stood at only 18% in 2023, compared to 73% for men.
- The vast majority of Egyptian women remain entirely outside the labor force.

2. Severe occupational segregation

- Women are highly concentrated in a limited number of occupations, primarily:
 - Teaching (especially primary education and kindergarten),
 - Nursing, and
 - Clerical and administrative support roles.

3. Gender wage gaps

- Private sector: Large wage gaps exceeding 40%.

¹⁷ AlAzzawi, S., & Hlasny, V. (2025). Occupational segregation and the gender wage gap in Egypt (Policy Brief No. 153). Economic Research Forum .<https://erf.org.eg/publications/occupational-segregation-and-the-gender-wage-gap-in-egypt/>

4. Public sector: Relatively smaller but still persistent wage gaps.

Deterioration of wages in female-dominated occupations: In professions such as primary school teaching, women's wages relative to men declined sharply from 51% in 1998 to 28% in 2023.

Demand-side factors:

- **Declining public sector opportunities:** Historically, the public sector was a major source of decent employment for women.
- **Exclusionary workplace dynamics:** Practices that reinforce "boys' clubs"¹⁸ and limit women's career advancement.
- **Wage discrimination:** Particularly prevalent in the private sector.

Supply-side factors:

- **Unpaid care responsibilities and the "motherhood penalty."**
- **Social expectations** that constrain women's career choices.
- **Barriers to private-sector employment** due to long working hours and demanding job requirements.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Promoting occupational integration and diversity

- Targeted training programs to prepare women for higher-paying sectors.
- Anti-discrimination policies to ensure equal opportunities across all occupations and leadership positions.

2. Addressing the experience gap

- Improving maternity leave provisions and expanding access to affordable childcare services.
- Investing in women's education, particularly in STEM fields.
- Leadership development programs for women.

3. Systemic reforms and reducing structural barriers

- Flexible work arrangements (remote work, job sharing).
- Improving technological infrastructure and internet connectivity.
- Investing in safe and reliable public transportation.
- Preserving public-sector employment in education and healthcare.
- Awareness campaigns to combat gender bias in the workplace and in society.

Conclusion:

The study underscores that occupational segregation between women and men is a major driver of wage gaps, particularly in the private sector. While Egyptian women have made significant gains in education, their economic participation remains limited and concentrated in low-paying occupations.

¹⁸ The study uses the term "boys' club" as cited in the literature, which denotes informal male-dominated power networks that limit women's access and advancement.

Addressing these challenges requires multi-level interventions to achieve equal opportunity and pay equity—both of which are essential for sustainable economic development in Egypt.

The impact of occupational segregation does not stop at traditional professions; rather, it extends to constraining women's roles in emerging strategic sectors on which the State is betting to achieve sustainability. This was underscored by a policy brief issued by the Economic Research Forum (Policy Brief No. 151, January 2025), entitled "*Gender and Climate Change in the Middle East and North Africa: Does Women's Participation in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Accelerate the Transition to Clean Energy?*"¹⁹

This study is particularly significant as it shifts the discussion from mere "empowerment" to women's leadership role in addressing climate change. It examines the relationship between gender diversity in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and readiness for the transition to clean energy in Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco. Its findings deepen our understanding of the structural reasons behind women's low participation in this vital sector.

The study was conducted in Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco to analyze the relationship between gender diversity in SMEs and the transition to clean energy, and it reached several conclusions, including:

Women's representation in management:

- Egypt (32%): 32% of firms have women in senior management positions. These firms are primarily concentrated in the retail sector, followed by the apparel and textiles sectors. Notably, senior management positions in firms operating in sectors such as construction, wood products, and furniture are occupied exclusively by men.
- Jordan (11%): Women hold 11% of senior management positions. Approximately 62% of these firms operate in the health and education sectors.
- Morocco (17%): 17% of firms have women in senior management positions. More than 10% of these firms operate in the retail or wholesale trade, information and communications, education, or health sectors.

Women's ownership of firms:

61% of firms in Egypt, 83% of firms in Jordan, and 60% of firms in Morocco have no female ownership at all.

Decision to consider using clean energy:

Among women-managed firms, 15% in Egypt, 33% in Jordan, and 35% in Morocco are considering the use of clean energy. This highlights the need to examine the reasons behind the low consideration of clean energy adoption among female management, to determine whether it stems from a lack of awareness or from structural inequalities and barriers faced by women managers.

Characteristics of Managers Associated with Considering the Use of Clean Energy:

The quantitative analysis shows that gender diversity in micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)—measured by the gender of senior managers, women's ownership, and the share of full-time female employment—does not have a statistically significant impact on the decision to consider using clean energy in the three countries. However, the interaction between the gender of senior managers and their other characteristics, such as age and education, has a significant influence on the decision to consider clean energy.

¹⁹ <https://erf.org.eg/publications/%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%86%d9%88%d8%b9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a7%d8%ac%d8%aa%d9%85%d8%a7%d8%b9%d9%8a-%d9%88%d8%aa%d8%ba%d9%8a%d8%b1-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d9%86%d8%a7%d8%ae-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d9%85%d9%86%d8%b7%d9%82%d8%a9>

In Morocco, women aged between 18 and 59 demonstrate higher environmental awareness and are more likely to consider using clean energy compared to older women. In Egypt, senior female managers holding a diploma or a university degree are less likely to consider the use of clean energy. This can be explained by their fields of study, as obtaining a university degree in non-STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) may hinder the decision to adopt clean energy.

In Morocco, senior managers holding a diploma are more likely to consider transitioning to clean energy compared to managers with only primary education or lower educational qualifications.

Impact of Firm and Country Characteristics on Considering the Transition to Clean Energy:

Firm- and country-level characteristics influence the decision to consider the adoption of clean energy. In Egypt, small enterprises are more likely to consider using clean energy compared to microenterprises. In Morocco, medium-sized firms employing more than 20 workers are more likely to consider clean energy than microenterprises. In Jordan, both small and medium-sized enterprises show a higher likelihood of using clean energy. This pattern is expected, as larger firms generally have greater capacity to invest in the technologies required for transitioning to clean energy.

The paper put forward a set of recommendations, including:

- **Commitment and concrete action** to ensure gender equality and the full enjoyment of women's human rights, both in practice and in law.
- **Supporting women's entrepreneurship** by expanding access to finance, training, and networks to support clean energy projects. Women should be able to access financing without the conventional requirements for collateral (such as land, housing, or capital), which women often lack the ability to provide.
- **Developing gender-responsive policies and frameworks** for the transition to clean energy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Women's needs and priorities should be integrated into all stages of energy and infrastructure planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This includes ensuring that clean energy policies and programs are inclusive and that workplaces are free from all forms of discrimination.
- **Promoting gender equality in education and employment**, particularly by ensuring that women and girls continue their education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields; guaranteeing equal access to training and mentoring programs in STEM; addressing negative and restrictive gender stereotypes in curricula and beyond; and supporting women's employment in STEM sectors regardless of gender or other differences.
- **Ensuring that STEM sectors are more responsive to women's care responsibilities**, including through supportive workplace policies.
- **Raising awareness of gender equality** by educating the public and policymakers about the importance and benefits of gender equality in the clean energy sector.
- **Monitoring systemic biases in technology and artificial intelligence**, and working to ensure media and information literacy, while empowering users of AI tools to think critically and dismantle gender stereotypes.

The study reaches a core conclusion: the mere presence of women in senior management positions—which stands at 32% in Egypt—is not sufficient in itself to integrate women into the global economic transition unless it is accompanied by a qualitative shift in technical skills (STEM) and improved access to asset ownership. The low propensity of Egyptian women managers to consider clean energy adoption (15%) reflects a knowledge-based and structural gap rather than a managerial one.

Moreover, the male monopoly over senior management positions in construction-related sectors confirms that occupational segregation continues to constitute a major barrier to women's access to the most profitable and sustainable sectors.

Based on these recommendations, which place gender at the center of environmental and financing policies, there is an urgent need for a legal framework that supports this transition and protects women's entrepreneurship from systemic discrimination. This leads us to an analysis of the New Labor Law of 2025, to assess the extent to which it responds to these contemporary requirements and addresses the structural gaps identified in both regional and national studies.

Economic Legislation: A Gender-Sensitive Reading of the New Labor Law No. 14 of 2025

The new Labor Law²⁰ was issued in May 2025 and entered into force in September 2025, serving as the governing framework for labor relations amid current economic changes. An analysis of the law's provisions from a gender perspective yields the following key observations:

- **Positive but incomplete progress:** The new law represents an important and positive step toward protecting working women, particularly through extending maternity leave, guaranteeing the right to return to work, and providing breastfeeding breaks. These provisions support women's participation in the labor market and enhance job security.
- **The challenge of entrenched gender roles:** Despite these protections, the law continues to reinforce traditional gender roles. Its provisions focus heavily on women's roles as mothers and caregivers, while largely ignoring the father's role in childcare, thereby placing the burden of family care almost exclusively on women.
- **Protective measures that may become a burden:** Some provisions intended to protect women—such as requiring employers to bear childcare or maternity-related costs—may inadvertently lead to indirect discrimination against hiring women of childbearing age, who may be perceived as an additional financial burden.
- **Legislative gaps in combating violence:** Although the law criminalizes harassment and bullying, it lacks clear enforcement mechanisms and specific penalties, leaving room for discretionary interpretation and potentially weakening the law's effectiveness in protecting women workers.
- **Lack of protection for vulnerable groups:** The law continues to exclude important groups, such as domestic workers, from legal protection, exposing them to exploitation and leaving a significant gap in achieving comprehensive equality.

To ensure that the Labor Law becomes an effective tool for achieving gender equality, a set of recommendations must be implemented to address existing gaps and strengthen the rights of working women:

- **Ensuring fair representation of women:** The executive regulations of the law should explicitly stipulate a minimum of 30% representation for women in all councils and committees formed pursuant to the Labor Law, to guarantee women's participation in decision-making processes.
- **Combating violence and harassment:** There is a need to incorporate clear reporting and protection mechanisms against violence and harassment in the workplace, along with explicit and well-defined penalties to deter perpetrators and protect victims and witnesses.
- **Providing childcare services for all:** The requirement of "100 female workers" to establish childcare facilities should be abolished and replaced with a fair formulation that includes both "male and female workers," reinforcing the principle that childcare is a shared responsibility between genders.

²⁰ <https://manshurat.org/content/qnwn-lml-ljdyd-rqm-14-lsn-2025>

- **Including domestic workers:** The scope of legal protection should be expanded to include domestic workers, ensuring them basic rights and a safe working environment.
- **Reconsidering restrictions on women's employment:** Restrictions imposed on women's employment should be reviewed, limiting special measures only to cases of absolute necessity, such as pregnancy. The optimal solution lies in improving working conditions and making them safe and healthy for all workers—men and women alike—rather than imposing permanent restrictions that may hinder genuine equality in the labor market.
- **Providing government support to employers:** To ensure that maternity protection does not become a burden that discourages the hiring of women, these provisions must be supported by effective government mechanisms. The state should offer incentives to employers or share the costs of maternity leave, thereby encouraging the employment of women and ensuring non-discriminatory implementation of the law.
- **Safeguards for women in flexible work arrangements:** Clear safeguards and oversight mechanisms should be established in the law and its executive regulations to ensure that flexible or remote work arrangements are not used as a means to reduce women's fundamental rights, lower their wages, or evade the provision of employment benefits. The goal is for these new work patterns to empower women rather than undermine their rights.
- **Monitoring and accountability:** Strengthening the collection of sex-disaggregated data is essential to monitor the actual impact of the law on women in the labor market and to assess its effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

A review of the situation of Egyptian women between 2024 and 2025—through wage gaps, green jobs, and the Labor Law—confirms that the gap lies not in capabilities but in opportunities and the enabling environment. Having concluded the assessment of economic rights, the analysis now turns to social rights, to examine how family transformations and spousal migration affect this fragile economic status.

Social Rights

The economic status of women is inseparable from their social and family context; changes in the structure of the Egyptian family directly affect the quality of life of women, their fundamental rights, and their ability to continue on various empowerment paths.

Marriage and Divorce Indicators: Marriage and divorce statistics reflect profound shifts in the nature of family stability in Egypt. Data from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS, November 2025) reveal a paradox: declining marriage rates alongside rising divorce rates, which imposes compounded social and economic consequences on women.

According to CAPMAS data, we observe the following:

First- Marriage: The number of marriage contracts in 2024 reached 936,739, compared to 966,120 contracts in 2023, representing a decrease of 2.5%. The distribution of marriage contracts is as follows:

By Geographic Area:

- **Urban:** 395,215 contracts in 2024, representing 42.2% of the total, compared to 388,696 contracts in 2023, an increase of 1.7%.
- **Rural:** 541,524 contracts in 2024, representing 57.8% of the total, compared to 577,424 contracts in 2023, a decrease of 5.4%.

By Age Group:

- **Grooms:** The highest marriage rate was among those aged 25 to under 30, with 384,416 contracts (41.0%), while the lowest was among those aged 75 and above, with 850 contracts (0.2%).
- **Brides:** The highest marriage rate was among those aged 20 to under 25, with 349,190 contracts (37.3%), while the lowest was among those aged 70 and above, with 482 contracts (0.04%).

By Educational Level:

- **Grooms:** The highest marriage rate was among those with a preparatory certificate, with 369,622 contracts (39.5%), while the lowest was among those with a postgraduate degree, with 2,961 contracts (0.3%).
- **Brides:** The highest marriage rate was among those with a preparatory certificate, with 318,563 contracts (34.0%), while the lowest was among those with a postgraduate degree, with 4,426 contracts (0.4%).

Second- Divorce:

The number of divorce cases reached 273,892 in 2024, compared to 265,606 cases in 2023, representing an increase of 3.1%. The distribution of divorce cases is as follows:

By Geographic Area:

- **Urban:** 158,201 cases in 2024, representing 57.8% of the total, compared to 150,488 cases in 2023, an increase of 5.1%.
- **Rural:** 115,691 cases in 2024, representing 42.2% of the total, compared to 115,118 cases in 2023, an increase of 0.5%.

Third- Divorce Attestations:

The number of divorce attestations reached 259,697 in 2024, compared to 254,923 in 2023, representing an increase of 1.9%. The distribution is as follows:

1. By Geographic Area:

- Urban: 144,615 attestations in 2024, representing 55.7% of the total, compared to 139,969 in 2023, an increase of 3.3%.
- Rural: 115,082 attestations in 2024, representing 44.3% of the total, compared to 114,954 in 2023, an increase of 0.1%.

2. By Age Group:

- Divorced Men: The highest proportion of divorces was in the 35 to less than 40 age group, with 47,637 attestations (18.2%), while the lowest was in the 18 to less than 20 age group, with 356 attestations (0.1%).
- Divorced Women: The highest proportion of divorces was in the 25 to less than 30 age group, with 45,635 attestations (17.6%), while the lowest was in the 75 and older age group, with 168 attestations (0.1%).

3. By Educational Level:

- **Divorced Men:** The highest proportion of divorces was among those with a middle school education, with 91,238 attestations (35.2%), while the lowest was among those with a postgraduate degree, with 430 attestations (0.2%).
- **Divorced Women:** The highest proportion of divorces was among those with a middle school education, with 85,851 attestations (33.1%), while the lowest was among those with a postgraduate degree, with 319 attestations (0.1%).

Fourth- Final Divorce Rulings:

- **Total:** The number of final divorce rulings reached 14,195 in 2024, compared to 10,683 in 2023, representing an increase of 32.9% of total rulings.
- **Urban:** 13,586 rulings in 2024, representing 95.7% of the total, compared to 10,519 rulings in 2023, an increase of 29.2%.
- **Rural:** 609 rulings in 2024, representing 4.3% of the total, compared to 164 rulings in 2023.
- **By Reason for Divorce:**
 - **Khula (divorce initiated by the wife):** accounted for the highest proportion with 11,906 rulings, representing 83.9% of final divorce rulings.
 - **Change of Religion:** accounted for the lowest proportion with 5 rulings, representing 0.04% of total final divorce rulings.

Key Conclusions from the Above Statistics:

1. **Widening Gap Between Marriage and Divorce Trends:** Egyptian society is witnessing a contraction in the marriage base alongside an expansion in divorce rates, threatening the stability of the traditional family model.
2. **Urban Areas as Drivers of Change:** Cities are the main sites of the increase in divorces and final divorce rulings, while the slight rise in urban marriages does not compensate for the significant decline in rural marriages.
3. **Most Affected Group:** Middle-aged youth (25–40) with intermediate education levels, primarily in urban areas, are the most affected.
4. **Divorce Initiated Solely by the Husband:** Data analysis shows a clear distribution of divorce mechanisms. Divorce initiated solely by the husband dominates, accounting for approximately 95% of cases, carried out directly through the marriage registrar. This high percentage reflects the prevailing nature of this pathway in the current system.

In contrast, only 5% of cases follow the judicial divorce route initiated by the wife. This pathway requires the wife to petition the court for a justified divorce based on specific reasons recognized by the law or legal system, such as marital disputes, adultery, psychological or physical harm, prolonged absence of the husband, serious or disabling illness, change of religion, or other reasons deemed valid by the court.

This significant disparity between the two pathways highlights the dominant mechanism for ending marriages, showing a clear preference for direct husband-initiated divorce.

5. **Future Implications:** This trend signals a likely increase in single-parent households (especially female-headed), greater pressure on legal and judicial services, and demographic and social effects that require proactive policies in family support and housing sectors.

Invisible Victims: Challenges of “Sole Provider” Status Amid Husband Migration

While the previous divorce and annulment statistics revealed the growing number of women facing individual provision after the dissolution of marriage, another group of women experiences a similar fate while the marital contract remains intact: the “left-behind migrant wives.”

This group exemplifies “Invisible care and economic support”, where the wife becomes, in practice, the head of the household, yet remains legally and socially constrained due to the husband’s absence. In this context, the Arab Women Organization’s study titled *“Invisible Victims: Left-Behind Wives of Migrant Husbands”* highlights the social and economic rights gaps faced by this category.

Study Methodology: The study employed a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of migrant wives in Egypt (Gharbia and Giza governorates). The sample included women from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds, both rural and urban, who had been solely responsible for their households for no less than three years.

Analysis Dimensions: The study focused on tracking fundamental changes in the lives of these women across several levels:

1. **Psychological and Emotional:** Assessing the effects of loneliness, self-perception, and health changes resulting from the stress of the husband’s absence.
2. **Family:** Analyzing shifts in role distribution, child-rearing responsibilities, and challenges in maintaining family stability.
3. **Social and Cultural:** Observing societal perceptions of the “left-behind” wife and her ability to cope with social pressures.
4. **Economic:** Describing financial management and consumption patterns, along with concerns regarding the flow of remittances and material needs amid inflation.

Study Findings (Case of Egypt)

- Left-behind women faced significant psychological, familial, social, and economic challenges.
- Their emotions were not entirely negative; despite fear, insecurity, helplessness, sadness, anxiety, anger, and depression, some women reported positive feelings of satisfaction, happiness, and optimism at times.
- The psychological state of some women was dynamic, ranging from temporary happiness to prolonged suffering, reflecting the paradox between the promise of wealth through migration and the threat of hardship.
- Husbands’ migration increased the burdens on left-behind women, limiting their employment opportunities, but it also strengthened their role within the family and their influence in child-rearing and family decision-making.
- Women’s power was viewed as building family strength; however, some children saw their mother as both a source of strength and vulnerability.
- The authority of left-behind women within their households reinforced patriarchal culture, as they raised sons and daughters according to gendered expectations.
- Despite adherence to traditional gender divisions of labor, husbands’ migration contributed to reshaping gender identity toward greater equality between boys and girls, though it also deepened gendered labor divisions and gaps among children.
- Children perceive both father and mother as models of gender differences in society. Despite the father’s absence and the mother taking on paternal roles, this is seen as a temporary exception that does not invalidate the broader societal principle of gender differences. Left-behind women viewed their success in raising children under these circumstances as proof of their effective parenting despite the absence of the migrant husband.

- Most left-behind women relied on the absence of their husbands to cope with internal feelings of loss. Adaptation strategies included accepting the situation, attempting to forget the sense of loss, practicing patience, relying on the husband's absence, embracing life without him, and suppressing internal emotions. For some women, the heavy responsibilities helped them recover from the shock of sudden spousal absence and adjust to life without him.
- Prolonged absence of husbands weakened intimacy, intensified misunderstandings, and increased conflicts, negatively affecting children's relationship with their father. Mothers, exerting strong influence, often positioned children on their side against the absent father, widening the gap between the family and the husband. Short visits by the husband were often perceived as awkward, unwelcome, and a source of conflict.
- Urban women were generally stronger and more adaptable to the husband's absence than rural women, who lacked the independence of urban counterparts. Education and employment played a major role in women's empowerment, independence, sense of security, and recovery from the psychological impacts of spousal absence.
- Husbands' migration influenced women's ability to cope with challenges arising from absence. The longer the migration period, the more left-behind women relied on their husbands' absence to manage daily life and household responsibilities independently.
- There is a link between marital relationship quality and children's connection with the absent father. Poor parental relations negatively shaped children's perceptions of their father. Children's psychological adaptation to the father's absence depended heavily on the mother's ability to cope with marital strain, as she became the primary source of stability and disruption in the children's lives.

In conclusion, it is clear that the situation of Egyptian women in 2025 is shaped at the intersection of empowerment aspirations and the challenges posed by traditional structures. While women strive to break occupational segregation and gain access to green and technological future jobs, they encounter a material wage gap and legislative challenges that are still experimental, such as the new labor law.

The social rights landscape, reflected in rising divorce rates and the phenomenon of "invisible victims" among wives of migrant husbands, shows that legal independence or forced sustenance does not necessarily lead to financial stability or social protection. Women have often become the de facto breadwinners, whether due to formal separation or the husband's absence for work, yet they still lack the safeguards that protect them from the "motherhood penalty" and the costs of unpaid care.

Transitioning from mere "survival" to genuine "empowerment" requires cross-sectoral policies that link wage equity, the reform of personal status laws, and the provision of care infrastructure, ensuring that gains in education and political representation translate into real improvements in women's daily lives.

Section Three: Violence Against Women: From Structural Oppression to Bodily Violation

First: "Time Oppression" and the Care Burden: The Fertile Ground for Violence

"In the absence of comprehensive statistical data on material forms of violence, structural violence emerges in the form of an unequal distribution of burdens, which drains the lives and capacities of

Egyptian women. In this context, a study titled 'Unpaid Care Work for Women in Egypt: Gender Gaps in Time Use'²¹ highlights deep gender disparities that constitute a form of social oppression.

The study focuses on the significant gender gaps in the distribution of unpaid care work—including direct care for children and the elderly, as well as indirect household work—between men and women aged 15–64 in Egypt. It employs both quantitative and qualitative analysis of time-use data to examine the social, demographic, and normative factors shaping this gap and provides policy recommendations."

Key Findings:

1. Enormous disparity in participation and time spent:

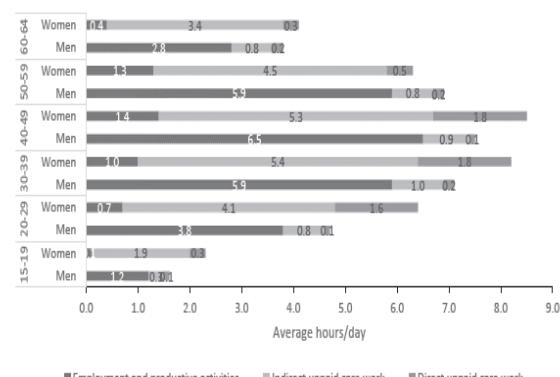
- 84% of women engage daily in unpaid care work, compared to only 34% of men.
- On average, women devote 5.4 hours per day to this work—more than five times the amount allocated by men (approximately 1 hour).

2. Main factors shaping the gap:

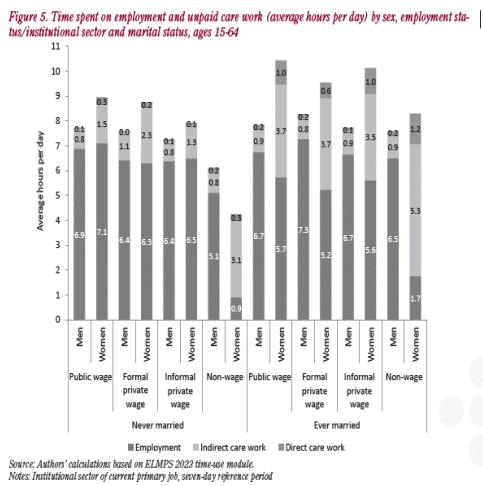
- **Age and marital status:** The most decisive factors.
 - The gap begins in adolescence (15–19 years) and widens significantly with marriage and childbirth, reaching a female-to-male ratio of 6:1 in time spent on unpaid care among married individuals.
 - The burden peaks in women's thirties and forties (around 7 hours per day).
- **Family dynamics:** The presence of young children (under 6 years) significantly increases the burden, especially for direct care. Indirect care (household chores) remains relatively high even as children grow older.
- **Geographical location and economic status:** Rural women bear a heavier burden (5.9 hours per day) compared to urban women (4.7 hours), with the gender gap widening in rural areas (ratio 7:1). Women in less affluent households also take on more household work.
- **Education:** Slightly mitigates the gap, as highly educated men contribute more, yet the disparity remains significant (ratio 5:1 among university graduates).

3. The double burden on working women:

Figure 1. Time use (average hours per day) by type of activity, sex and age group, ages 15-64



²¹ Atallah, M., & Hesham, M. (2025). Women's Unpaid Care Work in Egypt: Gender Gaps in Time Use. ERF Policy Brief No. 150. <https://erf.org.eg/publications/womens-unpaid-care-work-in-egypt-gender-gaps-in-time-use/>



- Married working women face a severe double burden, combining paid work with unpaid care, which raises their total working hours to around 10 hours per day—the highest among all groups.
- Marriage does not significantly affect the time that working men allocate to unpaid care, indicating the persistence of the traditional male "provider" role regardless of marital status.

4. The gap between personal beliefs and actual behavior (attitude–practice gap):

- Although women generally hold stronger pro-equality attitudes than men, and gender-equal

attitudes are increasing overall, these beliefs do not sufficiently translate into a fair redistribution of household burdens.

- Social resistance persists, especially among men, in helping with household chores (27% of men refuse to assist their working wives) or using external childcare services (45% of men refuse).
- There is a weak correlation between men's pro-equality attitudes and the actual time they spend on care, particularly on indirect care tasks.

Policy Recommendations (Framework: Recognition, Reduction, Redistribution):

1. Address entrenched gender norms:

- Integrate concepts of gender equality into educational curricula from early stages.
- Implement community awareness campaigns targeting both men and women to challenge stereotypes and encourage active male participation in caregiving.

2. Provide caregiving infrastructure and government support:

- Expand access to affordable and reliable childcare and eldercare services, especially for low-income families and rural areas.
- Invest in infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity) to reduce time spent on strenuous household tasks.

3. Gender-sensitive and supportive work policies:

- Promote flexible work arrangements (remote work, flexible hours) for both genders.
- Strengthen paid, non-transferable paternity leave to encourage men's involvement in early caregiving.
- Provide childcare facilities at workplaces or subsidize childcare costs.
- Expand social protection to include women in the informal sector, who are most vulnerable to the double burden.

4. Strengthen policy linkages:

- Connect market-based solutions (time-saving appliances, private care services) with government interventions (support, regulation) to ensure inclusivity for marginalized groups.

Second- From "Time Oppression" to "Bodily Violation":

The extreme acts of violence witnessed in 2025 cannot be understood separately from the previously discussed context of "structural oppression." The unequal distribution of burdens, wealth, and power within the household rarely remains confined within its walls; it often explodes into physical violence, serving as a final instrument of domination. Events from the year reveal a dangerous shift in the

pattern of violence—from momentary emotional outbursts to systematic forms of punishment—highlighting three main patterns:

A. Domestic Homicides: The Bloody Peak of Control: Domestic violence reached its tragic apex in a series of murders committed by husbands, where everyday disputes—under an imbalance of power—escalated to execution-like acts. For example:

- In Mokattam, a husband tortured and then deliberately killed his wife out of suspicion, using a stick and electric wire, while under the influence of drugs. Neighbors reported repeated assaults prior to the fatal incident.
- In Kafr El-Sheikh, a 19-year-old bride was stabbed to death in the chest by her husband only 31 days after the wedding, following a verbal altercation.
- In Bel Abour, a husband threw his wife (a housewife) from the fifth floor in front of their two daughters, causing her instant death, due to a disagreement between them.

These crimes do not reflect “loss of control” but rather a final assertion of control. The exhaustion of women in caregiving roles increases their isolation and reduces their options for escape, reinforcing the perpetrator’s perception of impunity.

B. Inheritance-Related Violence: Defending Male Ownership through the Female Body: Brutal attacks to deprive women of their legal inheritance rights escalated, reflecting the treatment of women’s bodies as family property. Examples include:

- In Faqous, a female medical student was publicly assaulted by her mother’s uncles in the street: she was dragged, her clothes torn, and both she and her uncle were beaten for her mother’s insistence on claiming her inheritance rights.
- In Alexandria, three brothers kidnapped their sister, assaulted her, and photographed her naked in an attempt to commit her to a psychiatric facility to pressure her into relinquishing her inheritance.

These attacks are not isolated; they are rooted in a context where women—exhausted by caregiving roles and economically dependent—are weaker in asserting their rights and more easily socially and legally portrayed as “violators” of entrenched male property norms. Here, violence becomes a tool to protect an unjust economic system.

C. Violation of Safety in Public Spaces: From Intimidation to Rape: Violence extended to spaces presumed to be safe, signaling the total violation of women’s bodies. Examples include:

- In the subway, an elderly man assaulted a young woman with his cane after reprimanding her for the way she sat, an incident recorded on video that exemplified “armed guardianship” of public space.
- At Al-Demerdash Hospital, a nurse exploited a sedated patient recovering from surgery to sexually assault her in the recovery room, violating the sacred boundaries of safety and trust within a medical facility.
- In Belbeis, a young man raped a 14-year-old girl after luring her to farmland under threat of a weapon.

The expansion of violence from private to public spaces—including hospitals and public transport—reflects the erosion of women’s sense of absolute safety. It demonstrates that the culture of ownership and control fostered in the home does not remain confined but spills over into society, sometimes reinforced by silent complicity or victim-blaming culture.

Third- Official Response: Between Symbolic Measures and the Gap in Real Justice:

The Minister of Justice inaugurated two secured rooms dedicated to “Women Victims of Violence” at the New Cairo Court, in collaboration with the United Nations, to facilitate women’s access to justice and ensure that they can provide testimony in a safe environment, free from any influence or pressure from opposing parties. The primary impact of this initiative is to empower women to complete legal procedures without exposure to harm or psychological trauma, thereby enhancing their protection and ensuring the effective administration of justice.

Despite this step, it remains a limited beginning in a long journey toward comprehensive justice for women victims of violence. Justice is not confined to the provision of safe rooms; it is an integrated process that begins from the moment a crime is reported, encompassing investigation and trial procedures, and extending to the enforcement of verdicts and ensuring that perpetrators do not evade punishment.

Protecting abused women can only be achieved through a radical reform of the justice system, which includes:

- **Scaling the initiative:** Expanding the experience to all courts nationwide, ensuring equal opportunities for all women.
- **Ensuring continuity of secured rooms:** Providing sustainable technical infrastructure and contingency plans to address any potential malfunctions.
- **Developing law enforcement mechanisms:** Ensuring the swift resolution of cases while maintaining justice standards, thereby strengthening women’s and society’s trust in the integrity of the judiciary.

This is the scene in 2025: a closed vicious cycle that begins with silent “structural oppression” (the unequal caregiving burden), which weakens women and entrenches their dependence, then erupts into blatant “physical violence” as a tool of punishment and domination, only to be met in the end with a partial “legal response” insufficient to break the cycle.

Breaking out of this vortex requires a qualitative shift in perspective: moving from treating symptoms (individual crimes) to uprooting the causes (the unfair distribution of wealth, time, and power within the family and society). Protecting women from violence is not a marginal “feminist” issue; it is a cornerstone for the security of society as a whole and a necessary condition for genuine development. The future is built on equality, and equality begins with sharing household responsibilities and culminates in respecting the sanctity of the body and life.

Recommendations

These recommendations aim to address the root causes of the problem through cultural transformation and economic empowerment, while urgently strengthening protection and justice systems. Their implementation requires genuine political will and recognition of women’s issues as a cornerstone for the security and stability of society.

First - Cultural Transformation and Knowledge Empowerment (Building the Foundation)

1. Revise and develop educational curricula at all levels to eliminate gender stereotypes, highlight female leadership role models across all fields, and instill values of equality and mutual respect between genders.

2. Integrate concepts of “citizenship and human rights” and “gender” as core subjects in pre-university and university education, with teacher training programs on these topics.
3. Implement intensive adult literacy programs focusing on women, linking them to vocational training and providing material incentives to the families of learners, to prevent educational dropout.
4. Integrate family financial planning and shared time management concepts into curricula to instill a culture of fair distribution of caregiving responsibilities between genders from an early age.
5. Ensure fair and qualitative representation of women in all committees responsible for developing and revising curricula within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Second - Economic Empowerment and Redistribution of Care Responsibilities (Pillar of Independence)

1. Develop and implement a national strategy to redistribute unpaid care work, including:
 - o Wide-reaching community awareness campaigns targeting men to encourage active participation in caregiving and household tasks.
 - o Investment in care infrastructure: expanding affordable, high-quality childcare centers, kindergartens, and eldercare facilities, especially in rural and informal areas.
2. Legislate and deepen gender-sensitive flexible work policies:
 - o Promote and generalize remote work and flexible hours in both public and private sectors, ensuring equality of opportunity and career advancement.
 - o Amend labor law to require companies employing 100 or more workers to provide safe on-site childcare or contribute to the cost of external childcare, with strict quality oversight.
 - o Implement and expand paid paternity leave, making it mandatory and non-transferable, to encourage men’s involvement in early caregiving.
3. Expand women’s access to finance and wealth-building opportunities:
 - o Allocate at least 35% of loans for small, medium, and entrepreneurial projects to women, with relaxed collateral requirements.
 - o Form partnerships with local NGOs to raise financial awareness and provide technical and administrative support for women (particularly rural and low-income urban women) to start and manage their projects.
 - o Expand social protection coverage to include women working in the informal sector.

Third - Political Empowerment and Leadership Development (Ensuring Representation)

1. Develop legislative frameworks to guarantee fair representation:
 - o Amend the Local Administration Law to adopt a mixed electoral system (proportional lists and individual seats), with a mandatory quota of no less than 25% for women in all local councils, in implementation and further development of Article 180 of the Constitution.
 - o Amend the Political Parties Law to require all parties to include at least 30% women in all leadership structures and on candidate lists for elections.
2. Establish mechanisms to support qualification and competition:
 - o Implement a progressive mandatory quota of at least 35% for women in senior leadership and administrative positions within the state administration and public authorities.
 - o Require parties and electoral bodies to allocate a portion of funding and logistical support for training and financing female candidates, ensuring fair competition.

Fourth - Comprehensive Legislative Reform and Strengthening Justice and Protection (Immediate Response)

(A) Comprehensive Legislative Framework

1. Enact a comprehensive law to combat violence against women covering all forms (physical, psychological, economic, digital, domestic, workplace, and public spaces), providing an integrated package including immediate protection orders, mandatory offender rehabilitation programs, and fast-track specialized judicial procedures.
2. Enact a modern Personal Status Law based on the principle of family partnership, decisively addressing early marriage, guaranteeing women's financial rights, and abolishing all practices that undermine the formal marriage contract.
3. Introduce a law to protect witnesses and whistleblowers in cases of sexual violence and harassment, ensuring confidentiality and protection from bullying or retaliation.

(B) Strengthening Access to Justice and Protection

1. Generalize and expand the "Safe Investigation and Testimony Rooms" model for women victims of violence in all public prosecution offices and courts nationwide, with mandatory training for judges, prosecutors, police officers, and forensic doctors on sensitive handling of survivors.
2. Activate and expand the mandate of the Ministry of Interior's Violence Against Women Units, linking them electronically to the support network (hotlines, shelters, hospitals) to form a rapid response mechanism.
3. Increase the number and improve the quality of "Shelters for Women Victims of Violence" under the Ministry of Social Solidarity to become comprehensive centers offering: immediate safety, specialized psychological support, legal assistance, vocational training, and help in securing independent housing and employment.
4. Coordinate effectively with the Ministry of Housing to allocate a portion of social and mid-income housing units for abused women and their children who need a safe residential alternative.
5. Establish a permanent government fund, "Survivor Reconstruction Fund," covering expenses for medical and psychological treatment, temporary living, and financing small projects to ensure their economic independence.

Fifth - Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms (Ensuring Implementation)

1. Mandate all relevant ministries and agencies to develop time-bound action plans and dedicated budgets for implementing these recommendations, with measurable performance indicators subject to public review.
2. Activate the role of the National Council for Women as an independent oversight body to monitor the implementation of public policies related to women, issuing a semi-annual report that is published and made accessible to the public.
3. Encourage and support independent civil society organizations focused on women's rights, ensuring they have a safe space to monitor and document violations, evaluate services provided, and raise public awareness.
4. Establish a unified national digital platform to publish all data and statistics related to women's status and violence against them, ensuring transparency and enabling evidence-based research and policymaking.

