

Gifts of Speech News

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In This Issue:

1. International Women of Courage
2. Stories of the Ten Women of Courage
3. Hopes for Women's D.C. Museum
4. Qatari Women More Educated Than Men
5. Quick History of Internat. Women's Day

1. International Women of Courage

Secretary of
State
Condoleezza
Rice [spoke](#) at a
March 7th



ceremony announcing the **Secretary of State's Award for International Women of Courage**. This award recognizes the first group of women from regions around the world. The event took place at 1:30 p.m. in the Benjamin Franklin Room of the U.S. Department of State. In honor of International Women's Day 2007, Secretary Rice established the annual Award for International Women of Courage, to recognize women around the globe who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for women's rights and advancement. This is the only Department of State award that pays tribute to emerging women leaders worldwide, and offers a unique opportunity for transformational diplomacy in the field of international women's issues.

The inaugural group of recipients were:

- Ms. Jennifer Louise Williams - Zimbabwe
- Dr. Siti Musdah Mulia - Indonesia
- Ms. Ilze Jaunalksne - Latvia
- Dr. Samia al-Amoudi - Saudi Arabia
- Ms. Mariya Ahmed Didi - Maldives
- Ms. Susana Trimarco de Veron - Argentina
- Ms. Mary Akrami - Afghanistan
- Ms. Aziza Siddiqui - Afghanistan
- Dr. Sundus Abbas - Iraq
- Ms. Shatha Abdul Razzak Abbousi - Iraq

Link: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/mar/81433.htm>

2. Stories of the Ten Women of Courage

Jennifer Louise Williams from Zimbabwe founded **WOZA: Women of Zimbabwe Arise**, which is a women's civic movement established in 2003 to empower female leadership and to encourage women to stand up for their rights and freedoms.

Dr. Siti Musdah Mulia is a prominent Indonesian Muslim feminist. In 2004, Mulia and a team of 11 experts completed the groundbreaking Counter Legal Draft (CLD) - which is aimed at revising Indonesia's Islamic legal code to ensure protective rights for girls and married women.

Ize Jaunalksne of Latvia is a journalist and anchor of Latvia's top current affairs TV program, DeFacto.

"Jaunalksne led the fight against Latvia's widespread political corruption by breaking the story of a vote-buying scandal on her current affairs program De Facto in March 2006. Her investigation revealed that the entrenched practice was protected by prominent leaders at the highest level of government, and her courageous exposé resulted in the indictment of some of these leaders and the resignation of a government minister."

From usinfo.state.gov

Dr. Samia al-Amoudi - a Saudi Arabian medical doctor who successfully diagnosed her own breast cancer and wrote a series of articles about her experience with cancer in her weekly column that is published in the Al-Madinah newspaper.

Mariya Ahmed Didi of Maldives is an elected member of parliament and she organized the first-ever women's rights rally in Maldives (March 2006), in response to plain clothes police arresting a female activist from her home late at night.

Susana Trimarco de Veron is an Argentine woman who fights against sexual-slavery kidnappings (human trafficking) that plague Argentina. She became an activist after her own daughter disappeared, presumably due to trafficking.

"Women disappear in Argentina every day," she said. "Many are taken away to Colombia, Mexico, Spain, Paraguay and other countries to work in the sex industry." Trimarco de Veron's efforts launched an intensive search that since has reclaimed 100 young women from the bondage of human traffickers.

[Mary Akrami](#) of Afghanistan is Director of the Afghan Women Skills Development Center, which is a women's shelter in Kabul. Women come to the shelter to escape domestic violence or forced marriages.

"She saw a need for such a shelter when a woman was arrested after being accused of disrespecting her father-in-law. The woman was found innocent, but was afraid to leave the jail for fear of how her family and society would react to the incident. From [usinfo.state.gov](#)"

Today the shelter takes in runaways and women released from prison who do not feel safe returning home. The shelter's staff provides legal advice, literacy classes, psychological counseling and basic skills training.

[Aziza Siddiqui](#) of Afghanistan is the women's rights coordinator with [Action Aid](#), an Afghan nongovernmental organization. She often meets with women in rural areas, where there is less access to education.

"Siddiqui organizes training sessions on decision-making and currently is teaching women in Afghanistan's Northern Provinces about their rights."
From [usinfo.state.gov](#)

[Dr. Sundus Abbas](#) of Iraq is the Executive Director of the Women's Leadership Institute in Baghdad and is a well-known speaker on the political problems of women in Iraq.

[Shatha Abdul Razzak Abbousi](#) also an Iraqi, is a member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, from the Iraqi Islamic Party, where she is also sits on the Human Rights Committee. Ms. Abbousi is a prominent Iraqi activist for reconciliation and for women's rights, and is a member of The Pledge for Iraq, a women's rights activist group.

Link: <http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/81473.htm>

3. Hopes for Women's D.C. Museum

"Women in Congress are reviving a bill to move the Web-based [National Women's History Museum](#) into a building on Pennsylvania Avenue. The support of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi raises their hopes."

Link: <http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/3105>

4. Qatari Women More Educated Than Men

"More than 70 per cent of the students at Qatari universities are women, a factor that might deeply change Qatar's social profile and customs in the next few years, experts warned."

Link:

<http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/03/24/10113205.html>

5. Quick History of Internat. Women's Day

"International Women's Day (which fell on March 8 this year) has been observed since in the early 1900's, a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies."

Link: <http://www.internationalwomensday.com/about.asp>

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