



## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

### Muslim and Arab Women in Sports

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#### EWIC Staff: Datasheet

- ❖ According to the 2015 book *Women's Sport as Politics in Muslim Contexts*, women in Muslim and Arab countries are “redefining their identities” as well as “claiming, transforming, and sometimes creating alternative spaces” through sports and athletic programs.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ For the first time in Qatar’s history, three Qatari women, swimmer Nada Arkaji, sprinter Noor al-Malki, and air-rifle shooter Bahiya Al-Hamad, competed in the 2012 London Olympic Games.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ In the 2012 Olympic Games in London, track middle-distance runner, Sarah Attar, 19, and judo competitor, Wojdan Shaherkani, 16, were the first female athletes to represent Saudi Arabia.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ According to an Al Arabiya article from March 2014, there has been an increase in female football clubs across Palestinian territories. Hundreds of Palestinian women participate in 20 private teams and compete in championships across the West Bank and Gaza strip.<sup>4</sup>
- ❖ In 2011, the Iranian women's soccer team could not play in their 2012 Olympic qualifying match against Jordan because team members refused to remove their hijabs.<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ In March 2012, the International Football Association Board, the world soccer's rule-making body, agreed to overturn a ban on the hijab (headscarf).<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ In May 2008, Sertaç Sehlikoglu Karakas, a member of the non-profit organization, Women Living Under Muslim Laws, and a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Toronto, created a blog called Muslim Women in Sports: The Role of Sport in Resisting, Accommodating and in Remaking Muslim Women.<sup>7</sup>
- ❖ In 2011, a public art project called Hey-Ya (Let’s Go): Arab Women in Sport, which showcases photographs of female athletes from the Arab world, was held at the Qatar Museum in Katara, Qatar.<sup>8</sup>
- ❖ In March 2012, the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) in Kuwait hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gulf Women’s Football Tournament. The four-day tournament included teams from the Gulf region including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.<sup>9,10</sup>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.wluml.org/sites/wluml.org/files/HoodfarWomen%E2%80%99s%20Sport%20as%20Politics%20in%20Muslim%20Contexts%20-WLUMI.%20site-fin2.compressed.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/02/world/meast/qatar-female-olympics/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://mic.com/articles/127163/meet-the-athletes-shattering-stereotypes-about-muslim-women-in-sports#.GACkUykpw>

<sup>4</sup> <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/sports/2014/03/21/Football-proving-popular-for-Palestinian-women-.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/olympics-soccer-hijab-idUSL4E8D95JV20120210>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news-and-comment/velcros-dramatic-save-leads-football-to-lift-ban-on-hijab-7534753.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/middle-east/muslim-women-in-sport/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.qm.org.qa/en/project/heyya-arab-women-sport>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.gust.edu.kw/content/gust\\_hosts\\_gulf\\_women%E2%80%99s\\_football\\_tournament\\_10th\\_anniversary\\_celebrations](https://www.gust.edu.kw/content/gust_hosts_gulf_women%E2%80%99s_football_tournament_10th_anniversary_celebrations)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-dorsey/iran-womens-soccer-hijab\\_b\\_1318549.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-dorsey/iran-womens-soccer-hijab_b_1318549.html)

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