

Dozens of Saudi women take the wheel to defy driving ban

More than 60 women challenge country's restrictions despite warnings from government;



←A Saudi Arabian woman drives a car as part of a campaign to **defy** Saudi Arabia's ban on women driving, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Photo by AP

1. More than 60 women across Saudi Arabia claimed they drove cars Saturday **in defiance of** a ban keeping them from getting behind the wheel, facing little protest by police in their push for easing restrictions on women in **the kingdom**.

2. The campaign's message is that driving should be a woman's choice. The **struggle** is rooted in the kingdom's **hardline interpretation** of Islam known as

Wahabbism, with critics warning that women driving could **unravel** the very **fabric** of Saudi society.

3. Though no laws ban women from driving in Saudi Arabia, **authorities** do not issue them licenses. Women who drove on Saturday had driver's licenses from abroad, activists said.
4. Activist Aziza Youssef, a professor at King Saud University, and another activist said protest organizers received 13 videos and about 50 phone messages from women showing or claiming they had driven. She said they have no way to **verify** the messages.
5. May Al Sawyan, a 32-year-old **mother of two** and an economic researcher, told The Associated Press that she drove from her home in Riyadh to the grocery store and back. Activists uploaded a four-minute video of her driving to the campaign's YouTube account.
6. Al Sawyan said she was prepared to be jailed if caught by authorities. She said she was far enough from a police car that she was not spotted.
7. "I just took a small **loop**," she said. "I didn't drive for a long way, but it was fine."
8. Al Sawyan's husband and family waited at home and called her nervously when she arrived at the store to check on her, she said. She drove with a local female television reporter in the car. They were both without male relatives in the vehicle, which in itself defies the country's strict **norms** requiring women to have a male relative in public.
9. "I am very happy and proud that there was no reaction against me," Al Sawyan said.
10. It is not clear if police **turned a blind eye** to women driving or simply did not see the **scattered**, quick spins around towns. An AP journalist in Riyadh said there were no roadblocks or checkpoints set up to watch for female drivers. He saw only a few law enforcement vehicles on the road.
11. A security official said authorities did not arrest or **fine** any female drivers yesterday. The official spoke **on condition of anonymity** because he was not authorized to speak to the media. [10/27/2013/The Associated Press]

defy:無視する **in defiance of**:～公然と無視して **kingdom**:王国 **struggle**:戦い、苦闘 **hardline**:強硬路線の、妥協しない **interpretation**:解釈 **Wahabbism**: サウジアラビアで信仰される保守的で不寛容な形態のイスラム教 a conservative and intolerant form of Islam that is practiced in Saudi Arabia **unravel**:ほどく、解れる **fabric**: (社会などの) 構造、骨組み **authorities**:当局 **verify**:確かめる、立証する **mother of two**:二児の母 **loop**:環状線、う回路の道 **norms**:規範(しばしばs) **turn a blind eye**:見て見ぬふりをする **scatter**:散在している **fine**:罰金 **on condition of anonymity**:匿名を条件に

★Ice breaker for active discussion★

1. What's the minimum age required before someone can drive in Japan? Is there any difference with the rule / law between men and women?
2. Why are women not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia? Do you know other discrimination that Saudi Arabian women are suffering from?
3. What is the goal or objective of the 60 women who took action about the matter?
4. Supposed you were a Saudi Arabian woman, and was asked to join in the movement, would you join it?
5. Do you think there is still discrimination on women in Japan? Can you specify an example of such thing?
6. Make sentences using the following words :in defiance of, struggle, hardline, interpretation, unravel, verify, norms, turn a blind eye, fine and on condition of.

NEWS DE TALK by PHILOS

サウジアラビアはイスラム教の中でも最も厳格なワッハブ派のシャリーアを国法とし、近親者の付き添いなしの外出禁止、遺産相続が男性の半分、一夫多妻制など、あらゆる場面において女性の自由と権利を制限しています。サウジアラビアは女子差別撤廃条約を批准してはいるものの「シャリーアに反しない限り」という留保のため事実上遵守されていません。今回の動きは、10月26日に一斉に車を運転する抗議活動がよびかけられ、海外で運転免許を取得した女性たちが堂々とハンドルを握る自分の映像をインターネット上で公開したものです。