

## **Abstract**

This paper aims to explore the question of the intersection, compatibility or conflict, between Islamic law and international human rights law through framing the current debates on how both legal doctrines address the concept of gender equality and women's rights. The paper seeks to define gender equality from both legal perspectives, addressing any differences or similarities in the meaning and the application of the term, and how terms of equity, equality and complementarity need to be carefully examined and used. By investigating the juxtaposition of both legal systems, Islamic law and International human rights law, on protecting women's rights, the paper aims to examine how Islamic feminists seek conformation and justice by creating their own wave of feminism from their own faith tradition, in an attempt to create an incorporating space for Muslim women to protect their identities and their faith. To bridge theory and practice together, the paper will then examine the Tunisian experience, and its recent reforms, as an illustrative case to assess whether the contemporary aspirations of Islamic feminists can prove compatibility between Islamic law reform and International universal human rights. Based on the findings, the paper seeks to utilize the efforts of Islamic feminists to analyze in what ways can Islamic law prove compatibility with international human rights law and in what ways it cannot. Finally, the paper will identify the challenges and limitations based on the findings of the research.

Merna Aboul Ezz is a Ph.D. Candidate in International Law at The Graduate Institute, Geneva. Her research focuses on the intersection of islamic law reform and international human rights law on feminism and gender. She professionally worked as a researcher and a consultant on gender-based violence, conflict, peace and security at different UN entities and NGOs including Global Survivors Fund, Small Arms Survey, UNITAR and UNHCR. She holds an MA in International Human Rights Law and a BA in Political Science and Middle East Studies from The American University in Cairo (AUC). During her BA, she double-specialized in International Relations and International Law, and double-minored in Economics and Arab and Islamic Civilizations.