

# Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Our great thanks to you Devaki and to your son for having set in motion the Devaki Jane Lectures which have been a forum for bringing women from the global S to talk about the issues that concern us all about the empowerment of women and the empowerment.

00:00:20 Speaker 1

Of the global S against the economic and the political challenges posed by the domination of the northern hemisphere. And we have had, through your kind auspices, 5 outstanding lecturers associated with your name.

00:00:36 Speaker 1

It is with some happiness. We welcome the lecture to Saint Anthonys particular happiness, to have a speaker from the Arab world and the Middle East, and to be welcoming our distinguished 5th Devaki Jain lecturer ronacher. Saying I I would.

00:00:56 Speaker 1

Just like to note that this is the final Devika Jane Lecture and and so that is a grounds for some regret because we know that these lectures in the four previous iterations at Saint Anne's College.

00:01:12 Speaker 1

Have been a source of light to the conversation here in Oxford, and we always hate to see the lights go out.

00:01:19 Speaker 1

So should there be the opportunity to extend the life of the Devaki Jane Lectures, you'll have all of us in the audience today advocating for that actively. But for what you brought to us, we wish to say we're very grateful and we are excited to be continuing this tradition to night. We just wish that instead of talking to you on zoom.

00:01:41 Speaker 1

From Delhi, we will be having you with us in person in Oxford and we hope to have that pleasure in the very near future again. So thank you.

00:01:48 Speaker 1

Vicky.

00:01:49 Speaker 1

And I would now like to take a moment to introduce our speaker tonight and it's a particular pleasure to be welcoming to Oxford and to the middle.

00:01:59 Speaker 1

East.

00:02:00 Speaker 1

Centre as the 5th Devika Jane lecturer Rana Hussein.

00:02:07 Speaker 1

Doctor Hussein is a Jordanian human rights activist and a senior journalist who has been writing for Jordanian press, most notably the Jordan Times.

00:02:16 Speaker 1

She's focused on social issues over the last 25 years, with the special interest on violence against women, as well as the brutal crimes that are committed against Jordanian women in the name of family honour. And no one likes to pair the word honour with murder because they are so incompatible with each other and I think no one has been more vocal and outspoken.

00:02:39 Speaker 1

In combating this notion, so deeply entrenched in Jordanian society as honour killing.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

So I think we have run at you thank for having led the struggle on this most enduringly through the books that she has written, her 2009 classic murder in the name of honour.

00:03:00 Speaker 1

Is already on the track to setting the record right on how dishonourable such violence is, and then most recently, her 2021 years of struggle, the women's movement in Jordan, we will hear from ranah to night drawing on these themes, and I hope you will all join me in extending the warmest of welcomes to runner.

00:03:25 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:03:26 Speaker 2

Very much everyone. Thank you for coming. Thank you Doctor Devaki Devaki.

00:03:31 Speaker 2

For inviting me to be part of this important event to to how do you say to see in the programme which I hope it will be reborn again and you will have more lectures coming thanks to everyone.

00:03:49 Speaker 1

Anthony's here. Anna's there, but either 1 I don't.

00:03:52 Speaker 2

Care. Thanks for everyone who really helped me come here and be part of this lecture.

00:04:01 Speaker 2

I will talk in two in two things because first of all, I'll talk a bit about myself and then I want to also share with you, you know, the part of the Jordan women's movement because I think hasn't it been for these women who fought and worked hard, I wouldn't probably be here so.

00:04:20 Speaker 2

You always have to acknowledge and respect people before you, and I brought with me. I ordered actually this book, my first book murder and name, honour. It was published here in Oxford. I used the British publishing house because I felt they were serious. They will not play with the theme itself.

00:04:40 Speaker 2

And so I've ordered some books. Please feel free to have some. And this is my recent book which I carried with me take with you.

00:04:52 Speaker 2

So that the bag will not be no, I'm joking. So yeah, so most of the presentation will be part of you know, it's part of what's in this book and a bit more. But since Miss Devache said she wanted to hear more about me as a feminist and how I started my journey in Jordan.

00:05:11 Speaker 2

I studied in the USA but before that.

00:05:16 Speaker 2

I was in Jordan. I was an athlete. I played basketball and that's in the 80s. Yes, I was. I played for 20 years and I was the captain of the national team.

00:05:25 Speaker 2

And back then, I always felt discriminated against. I'm talking in the 80s like the men would get everything. Your clothes, shoes. They will get to travel. They will get to train and we would work. Beg them to, you know, organise something for us. So when I went to study in the US, I always wanted to come back and.

00:05:43 Speaker 2

Do something because there was also discrimination against women in the laws. Many laws, you know, but the issue of so-called honour crimes, which is the book, the first book I wrote, was never in my head. I never experienced such violence or knew anyone who experienced.

00:06:03 Speaker 2

Much violence around me, we would read about the story here and there when we were young, but.

00:06:08 Speaker 2

So for me, I always wanted to go back and do something for women in Jordan. I wanted to change the laws. You know, like you now you all want to change the world with with your age. You want to do a lot of things. And now with social media, it's even a different ball game. So when I returned to Jordan.

00:06:28 Speaker 2

The news I I wanted to work for the Jordan Times. I said I will cover anything. Whatever they give me, I will cover and then I will find my way to my cause.

00:06:38 Speaker 2

But so they assigned me as the crime reporter. I don't know. Is it my height? I don't know what?

00:06:43 Speaker 2

So I start, I said, OK, crime, crime. I'll start reporting crime. So what? That was in 93, so I started coming across murders, including so-called honour killings. Started reporting about women who are killed. And then there was a very sad story that happened in June of or May of 1994.

00:07:04 Speaker 2

Which was a girl who was 16. She was killed by one of her brothers because another brother raped her. So they basically blamed her for the rape. Now this is not a daily occurrence in Jordan, but this was the story that made me do everything I'm doing until this day.

00:07:18 Speaker 2

Which is this woman? This girl was a victim 6 times. Her brother put sleeping pills for her. He raped her. Then he threatened to kill her if she tells her family she became pregnant. She had to tell them. He tried to kill her.

00:07:31 Speaker 2

She.

00:07:31 Speaker 2

Survived. And then they married her off to a man who's 34 years older than her.

00:07:38 Speaker 2

She had a secret abortion. Imagine all these horrific details. She's only 16.

00:07:44 Speaker 2

So I reported the story for the Jordan Times and the following day a woman called the newspaper and instead of encouraging me, she was screaming and yelling at my editors that they should stop me from reporting about these crimes because this is not us or our society. So I became even more enraged that a call came from instead of thanking me.

00:08:04 Speaker 2

And at that time, really the press wasn't.

00:08:07 Speaker 2

Reporting about such cases, even violence against women, was not accepted. Not in Jordan, not in the region. By the way, it was very hard for you to open a newspaper now talking newspaper, which now for.

00:08:17 Speaker 2

You.

00:08:17 Speaker 2

Is obsolete, but it was to open a newspaper and read the. Yeah, like a violence again. It was like taboo. Nobody. So what about?

00:08:26 Speaker 2

So-called our killings, it was double taboo. Tripled.

00:08:30 Speaker 2

So because I worked in the Jordan Times, we had more flexibility. It was in English, not, you know, it was a certain readers. So I got in grades. I said I want to show and show

everyone that else that know this is not us. This is our society. We need to do something about it. So I started to report each and every case I heard about.

00:08:49 Speaker 2

Our readers, the Jordan Times, are the decision makers, the royal family, the government, the intellectuals, people who are learning English. So it's not a big audience.

00:08:59 Speaker 2

And but I said I wanted to report somewhere that these women were killed and someone was getting away with it. Also, they were getting away with murder 3 months, six months. So that was my focus in the beginning. And I was, like, documenting, documenting. I said, I want to document, to put that this woman lived on this earth and she's no longer with us.

00:09:19 Speaker 2

So I started winning awards. I never aimed for awards, you know? So as you see the the topic came to me. I didn't go I. So this is how I started my work back then it was, you know, we did have female journalists who were crime reporters, but because a lot of people would ask me, is it easy for you, you know?

00:09:39 Speaker 2

To be a female and write about crimes. And yeah, it was OK. I mean, it wasn't that bad in the beginning. Of course, as any journalist, I don't know if any of you studying journalism, it's hard to you need to work on establishing sources and so forth to have to gain their confidence and so forth.

00:09:59 Speaker 2

And of course, there was a lot of people who were against me. If you want to talk about the feminist angle, there was a lot of people who were like this, this crazy radical feminist who is just want to destroy the morals of our society. Who wants to expose us? Although I never identified myself as a feminist. But still people labelled me and they they labelled me as a Western agent.

00:10:21 Speaker 2

There were all kinds of labelling happening until this day, by the way, and in my presentation, I'll tell you more about.

00:10:27 Speaker 2

How they labour the women's movement it's and it's in, I thought in the beginning it was only in Jordan, but when?

00:10:32 Speaker 2

I started to.

00:10:33 Speaker 2

Go and see other activists worldwide, by the way. It's not only in our region.

00:10:39 Speaker 2

They're always labelled Western Zionists, a western agent. Zionist agents. I get paid to write. I mean, really, I don't need anyone to tell me what's right and what's wrong. I have a brain. I.

00:10:50 Speaker 2

Can think to.

00:10:50 Speaker 2

Myself. So this was the beginning of my work. This was basically one of the the.

00:10:57 Speaker 2

The first bumps.

00:10:58 Speaker 2

My life and then back then also people were saying what are you doing? You're wasting your time. You write in English. Nothing will ever change is in this country. Don't reach a wide audience. You're wasting your time. But I said no. I kept going on. I felt that I needed to report about these crimes. You know, I wanted to be persistent.

00:11:19 Speaker 2

Be consistent.

00:11:21 Speaker 2

To NAG, basically I wanted to nag our readers, and we succeeded in nagging them.

00:11:27 Speaker 2

After I won my second award, which is the Reebok Human Rights Award, I discovered that I was also a human rights activist. I'm not only a journalist, so then I had two things to carry with me. I'm like, OK, I'm not just a reporter.

00:11:41 Speaker 2

So that the the how do you say the responsibility grew when I came back from to Jordan after winning this award?

00:11:49 Speaker 2

A group of young men and women approached me and said let's do something on the grassroots level. So we formed a committee and we were meeting at houses. We didn't have an NGO or anything and we were sitting and strategizing what we need to do and all of that. So we decided to write a petition and have people sign it. And we went out to governor or it, telling them about these crimes.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

And this was something very important because it really broke a lot of social taboos. The media, of course, started to write about us, some of us slandering us, accusing us of being Western agents, others thanking us. So this is when we broke the silence around this topic.

00:12:26 Speaker 2

Ever. Also, the women's movement after that started to do their own activities, so it became all a national movement. Of course, the petition we put gave it to the Parliament that they were. We want to cancel the laws that offers leniency to killers. They didn't listen to us. On the contrary, they trashed us in the Parliament. They trashed women.

00:12:46 Speaker 2

Of Jordan in the parliament back then, but eventually things changed. But several laws changed a lot of things have changed. I will talk more about it in the in the presentation.

00:12:58 Speaker 2

So this is basically, I would say my struggle as a journalist, which basically I can't I it was a struggle in terms of not me being a woman. I think it's the topic itself. It was a very hard topic. It was a challenging and daring topic, a topic it was people were.

00:13:19 Speaker 2

You know, sometimes asking me are you afraid for your life? I got some threats, people, you know, threatened me. You know, if I didn't stop from reporting. But I didn't listen to anyone. I said, you know, I'll just keep going because I didn't. I'm not harming anyone. I'm not doing anything wrong on the.

00:13:34 Speaker 2

Country.

00:13:35 Speaker 2

It's defending someones life as is as.



00:13:39 Speaker 2

It's something noble, I think so. And here I am today talking to you. And when I wrote this book, of course it took me 5 years. It took me 10 years between finding and publisher because, you know, most people want someone to come and curse. Since we are here in the Middle East section.

00:13:59 Speaker 2

So maybe you understand me more. They look more for someone who is.

00:14:03 Speaker 2

Coming to curse the Middle East or Arabs or Muslims or whatever, or trying to say that this is a Muslim thing or and from the beginning I told, you know that I found an agent here and I told the agent, listen, I want a publisher that is not.

00:14:16 Speaker 2

Going.

00:14:16 Speaker 2

To try to enforce such ideologies in the book because I'm not hiding anything, but there is crimes, they happen.

00:14:24 Speaker 2

Everywhere they happen among all religions and.

00:14:26 Speaker 2

Classes in several countries, not only in Jordan. Eventually I found one world which is here in Oxford and also I told them before, before I signed the contract. I told them if you I have a condition, I will not accept a cover that has a covered woman.

00:14:46 Speaker 2

Or a man with a beard, or someone standing next to a mosque or whatever.

00:14:51 Speaker 2

You know, so they accepted and in the beginning they didn't know how to do the coverage for them. It was, they were, they had difficulty and then they brought a professional person and then they came up with this cover, which is very expressive as well. So when I wrote this book, I said there's no way on Earth. I mean, it's like doing a pH. D it's crazy.

00:15:11 Speaker 2

Five years. It's a nightmare to write the book and you know the editing process and all that. I said. No way. That's it. I'm never writing a book again.

00:15:19 Speaker 2

In.

00:15:19 Speaker 2

My life, but never say never.

00:15:25 Speaker 2

Fast forward 10 years later in 219, I decided, hey, why don't I? Because of my work, I noticed that there's not a lot of resources for women.

00:15:36 Speaker 2

In Jordan, it's all scattered, it's incomplete, or someone would write from their own perspective. They would put some and leave everyone else. I got a lot of emails from students, mainly from researchers. Everybody wants to know something and I would sit and spend hours answering them because as an activist I felt this is my duty.

00:15:57 Speaker 2

To help students.

00:15:58 Speaker 2

So I said, why not gather everything in a book and make it free? This one is on Amazon, but for.

00:16:06 Speaker 2

You it's free.

00:16:06 Speaker 2

I.

00:16:07 Speaker 2

Wonder it, but I said I because I know when I was a student, you know, you want the money for something else. Nobody wants to pay for books. Now you're lucky because you have the Internet and all that. You can get everything free.

00:16:18 Speaker 2

Almost. But anyway, during our time we had to pay. So, so I said I'll combine everything in a book.

00:16:26 Speaker 2

And it's available free as a hard copy and online so you can find it PDF and the idea was I interviewed 35 Jordanian men and women. I did use 98% of their references are from Jordanian men and women, be it researches, papers and articles. Whatever. So because I wanted it.

00:16:46 Speaker 2

To be our story.

00:16:47 Speaker 2

Told from Jordanian men and women to their peers. So this is the idea and for free because I believe that no one should pay to to pay money, to read their history, especially women's history as well.

00:17:01 Speaker 2

So I went to Frederick scripting with the German organisation and because they are the ones who always support these things and they like the idea and I got a very small support and I wrote the book during the corona time when we were locked up and when we were able to go out.

00:17:21 Speaker 2

I would go jump and interview someone and then come back it was.

00:17:24 Speaker 2

Yeah, but I mean, and also I also did a lot of articles, I used a lot of my articles because I've been a reporter for 30 years now covering women's issues. So I know a lot about the what has been happening, especially the last 20 years. So my idea was I was going to call it 20 years because I was focusing on the last 20 years.

00:17:44 Speaker 2

But then there were the Frederick Ebert said no, hey, it looks better if you dropped the 20. So we dropped the 20 since I started in the 40s. So I started in the 40s. I depended on five.

00:17:57 Speaker 2

Major female researchers, doctors or doctors and they started in the 40s documenting the women's movement in the 40s when they started to work as a group. We did have some individual women who worked in the before, but it was not visible. So in the 40s, you know?

00:18:17 Speaker 2

Basically, women's women's role was very limited in Jordan. They didn't do a lot of, you know, activities back then.

00:18:27 Speaker 2

So yeah, in the 40s, women were sort of excluded. They didn't have, you know, a lot of say back then.

00:18:35 Speaker 2

Elections, of course, is something very important. We have a Parliament in Jordan. Women were not allowed to vote or run for elections to only men could vote. Back then the first Women's association in Jordan was established under the name Social Student Society by Group of school teachers. Imagine these are.

00:18:54 Speaker 2

It was charitable, of course, and the ordinary president was Queen Misbah, which is the first Queen of Jordan.

00:19:02 Speaker 2

In 1944, Women Women's Group went and took part in the first Arab women's meeting. You know why? You know, I'm telling you this because this was something rare. I mean, it was. It was a big deal for women to travel alone. Back then, I'm sure you know, similarly here you could.

00:19:20 Speaker 2

It was very.

00:19:20 Speaker 2

Hard to, but nevertheless they did go and they did.

00:19:23 Speaker 2

Meet women from other countries as well their demands. I want to tell you their demands.

00:19:30 Speaker 2

Back then, we're more progressive than now.

00:19:34 Speaker 2

There are some things I will tell you that now they the women cannot call for achieve economic independence back in the 40s, equal pay and and polygamy. Now if you call in Jordan for ending polygamy.

00:19:46 Speaker 2

You will go to.

00:19:46 Speaker 2

Gaol.

00:19:48 Speaker 2

Or, you know, you will be an outcast.

00:19:51 Speaker 2

Amend the personal status Law grant working men women full six week maternity leave now it's they they finally they got up until 90.

00:20:00 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:20:01 Speaker 2

And address articles that openly discriminates against women. This was really back then. It's a big deal, you know? And the 40s were talking about, you know, women didn't have a say in anything.

00:20:13 Speaker 2

There were two women, Egyptian women, who really affected the women's movement in Jordan, which is Huda Sharawi, who was a well known activist, and Amina said he was a journalist. They came to Jordan and they convinced King Abdullah to first the first, now King Abdullah, second to.

00:20:33 Speaker 2

Form a union for the women and he agreed. So they opened the Women's Union Society.

00:20:42 Speaker 2

The Union was headed by the Queen's end by then, Queens back was gone. Now we have Queens end again. Increase women's education, improved children's that you see. They were more subtle about their demands.

00:20:54 Speaker 2

Now the 50s, I would always say the 50s in Jordan for me are the Golden Times because back then it was mostly political parties. The nasserism time, communist nationalist. It was a different Arabic than in Jordan and everyone was working for everything.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

Everyone was working forever. I mean, it's not like our women are only working for women's causes. Even men were also working.

00:21:19 Speaker 2

For women's causes.

00:21:21 Speaker 2

This is a photo in the 50s. Look at the women. The women are in the front in Jordan. They're leading the protests in the 50s.

00:21:33 Speaker 2

Now the Communist Party back then had a big role in Jordan and they were supporting women's rights and they established a branch, which is for to defend the women's rights, fight for the liberation of women. You see, this was all like, very, very progressive and advance.

00:21:51 Speaker 2

Their demands, full equality for women in in, in everything raise women's awareness to get involved in nationalistic and political activities, participate in demonstrations and they did participate a lot.

00:22:04 Speaker 2

We another important thing was the establishment of the Young Women's Christian Association. I'm sure you all know about it. It still exists until today, but it was also an important NGO for women that still does charity work until this day and do a lot of activities, not only charity.

00:22:19 Speaker 2

Now this woman is the first female lawyer in Jordan, and she was the first woman to head this important Arab Women Federation, and they were doing a lot of activities. Her name is Emily Sharad. You know, they were going out to the streets. They were doing all kinds of things. Their demands equals the surprise, you know.

00:22:39 Speaker 2

I don't want to read because you can read, but why do I put their demands? I want to show you why I'm putting their demands.

00:22:45 Speaker 2

To show you how progressive they are and to show that their demands were before the CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women because one of the attacks that the women movement keep having in Jordan and in the Arab

world is that, oh, you're all following CEDAW. Ceda is calling for gay rights. Of course, there's nothing about it, but they keep, you know.

00:23:05 Speaker 2

Creating all these things to to deviate from the real problem, but see how feminists were progressing back then and the women's move.

00:23:17 Speaker 2

They also sent a memo in in the 1954 they sent a memo to the government asking them to give them the right to vote. They said, you know, no, the women couldn't vote. Illiterate men could vote, women could not. I mean, this was a big deal back then. It took them some time. They also prepared the petition.

00:23:35 Speaker 2

That was.

00:23:41 Speaker 2

How do you say, fingerprinted by women also asking for their right to vote? This was also look at their activities. It was really, really important time. I mean very organised. They were all, you know united. It was very important.

00:23:58 Speaker 2

They sent a telegram to the late King Hussein. Another thing they did, and back then, you know, people didn't dare to send something to the king or address, but they nevertheless they did. And they sent this telegram. And it was also a big deal.

00:24:13 Speaker 2

But unfortunately in 1957 there was an attempted coup on the life of the late King Hussein and they banned. They banned all in activities, all NGO's except the Muslim Brotherhood. They were the only ones who stayed in the scene and everyone else was banned. They were harassed. They were.

00:24:34 Speaker 2

Imprisoned, they were kicked out of their work. If their their children, they would have been harassed. They couldn't leave the country. It was a really, but nevertheless, they still worked underground.

00:24:46 Speaker 2

Now the 60s, the women's movement were influenced by the Palestinians, now in the 50s, forties, Egyptians, now Palestinians, they were united because it's Jordan and Palestine. It's considered back then like 1 country, one family.

00:25:03 Speaker 2

And women's groups start travel to raise awareness about the Palestinian cause. You know, after the first war in 48, they were always focusing, trying to help, helping the refugees.

00:25:14 Speaker 2

They they demonstrated against the Israeli occupation of Palestine, you know, they were always in the streets but but in one way they couldn't do many activities. It was only OK if you not talk about that. OK. If you want to have refugees go for it but nothing else.

00:25:32 Speaker 2

In the meantime, the Muslim Brotherhood strengthened its brothers. They infiltrated the network, schools, colleges, healthcare. They were everywhere. They were doing all kinds of activities. They were given the green light by the government to do whatever they want.

00:25:47 Speaker 2

The thing is also in 1967, when the war when Jordan and everyone lost the war, it was a disaster for everyone. This is where the women's movement also started to work more on refugees and that's why the 60s we couldn't. We didn't see a lot of activities for women because it was mainly, first of all, they were banned from working. But then if they work, it was only for refugees and so forth.

00:26:09 Speaker 2

Now the 70s they they continued to give services to refugees and so forth. There were some NGOs that were allowed to work, but it was also limited. Now I think that in 1975, which is the first year in Women conference in Mexico, I think this was a turning point for women in Jordan.

00:26:29 Speaker 2

And every every woman in the world, it was the first time that all women in the world met in a in a UN activity. It was a big deal for women worldwide. Now in 1974, year before.

00:26:44 Speaker 2

The women's groups went to the government and told them this, and there's going to be an index in this conference and it's a shame in the index to see that all women can vote and run for elections and in Jordan they cannot. So they convince the government that they, they convince the king and they were allowed to vote. So this is when 20 years it took them 20 years.



00:27:05 Speaker 2

So they will grant the right to vote and then for parliamentary elections in 1974. It took them 20 years. There's a lot of things that took 20 years in Jordan. We talk about it later.

00:27:17 Speaker 2

Now some achievements we had, the first woman ambassador in 1970. She didn't serve anywhere as an ambassador, but she was called an ambassador, which is important. And we had the first woman who was appointed as Minister of Social Development in 1979. These were breakthroughs because before that we didn't see women in decision making positions.

00:27:37 Speaker 2

Anywhere. So now in 79, keep that in mind.

00:27:41 Speaker 2

In the 80s, now the the 80s, we had the the, the, the, the professors that I've studied and to write the book, they talked about something called Ngozi Action. So we moved from movements into NGOs. Now we have a structure, strategies, you know, all just working on programmes. So it's.

00:28:03 Speaker 2

There was a shift in in their work.

00:28:07 Speaker 2

The first time, in 1984 was the time when women first cast their ballots. In 84, there was a by elections in the Parliament, some 16 member.

00:28:17 Speaker 2

Died or changed or whatever. So there were these elections internally and women were able to vote but not to run. They are not known. They were able to run, but nobody at that time run for elections.

00:28:31 Speaker 2

The turning point from Jordan when they were able to participate in elections was in 1989. We had 12 women who ran for elections. That was a big number. In 89. It was a big deal, and fortunately none of them won.

00:28:45 Speaker 2

The reasons were patriarchal and tribal system, weak political parties, religious movement that rejected women's participation. They were fought by the religious movements and the media.

00:28:58 Speaker 2

Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood continued to dominate the scene. We had the Syrians who escaped from the first Assad's regime because there was a massacre in some 2 cities, so they came. They were selling their tapes. They're distributing their own kind of material and they were allowed to do that, you know.

00:29:19 Speaker 2

This was something important. Now we move to the 90s. I think the 90s was. Some people tell me. But the 90s, which is when I started a journalist, I should be telling, saying that it was the golden time then. But I think I still believe the 50s was the best. But the night is really a lot of things changed in the 90s. First of all, establishment.

00:29:39 Speaker 2

Jordanian National Commission for women headed by Princess Basma Abdul Talal, who is the the sister of King Hussain, and the Commission's mandate. You know, they worked on many activities related to women doing the strategies and the economic empowerment as you see in the screen.

00:29:55 Speaker 2

Now, in 1993, it was the history was made in Jordan with the first woman winning. Finally the elections because in 89 or the 12 women failed, only three women ran in 93. But this woman, to Jean Faisal, won.

00:30:15 Speaker 2

Who was the first woman to win in direct elections? Of course she was fought before the elections. It was. There's a big story, you know, she was in a TV programme and they accused her of.

00:30:28 Speaker 2

Of calling for women to marry for men, which is not true, and there was a big deal and then, you know, it was she was going to prison and all of that. And then after that, she still got in trouble and she went to prison after anyway. Later on in life, it was. It's all in the book. I really think she's an amazing woman. And she suffered a lot.

00:30:48 Speaker 2

Because of her idea.

00:30:51 Speaker 2

Speaking, Hussein appointed Dr Rima Khalaf as the first female minister to serve as the Trade and Industry. This was a very important post because in the past they would say,

oh, you put women in minimal ministries like culture, social development, whatever, all that. So she was the first to.

00:31:09 Speaker 2

And this? And then she was the Minister of Planning, Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Planning is very important. It's like the the ministry that runs all the projects and activities.

00:31:20 Speaker 2

In 1999, she was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister, the first woman until now and the last. We didn't have a female Deputy Prime Minister. It was when King King Abdullah took over she was appointed.

00:31:37 Speaker 2

In 1994, of course, because women were not able to run to win in the Parliament and because of the one person, one vote system back then.

00:31:45 Speaker 2

It was very hard. People were always as I you saw before. They were always referring to elect a man because, oh, I want a man from my clan. I want a man to do this. If something happens, who's going to go to pay condolences? It's a man's job. They always think of these things that are trivial, you know, because the deputies shouldn't be doing.

00:32:05 Speaker 2

All this but this is how the society was thinking back then.

00:32:09 Speaker 2

So Princess Basma's idea was that let's put women in the city councils so that people become accustomed to to, to, to dealing with them because they have to deal with them and their councils and their governorates. They have to do go, do you know, certain things. And this way that they start to get accustomed that women are there and their governments doing.

00:32:30 Speaker 2

Things and 99 women were appointed. This was an important move. Also in 95 they were the establishment of the Jordanian National Forum for Women. They also had branches everywhere in Jordan, and they also contributed to increasing the number of women running in the City Council.

00:32:47 Speaker 2

In 1995, of course, we started. This is when I started to report about violence against women. Gender based violence, about so-called honour killings, the women's movement, the Jordanian's movement launched the first hotline in Jordan. This was in 1995. It was an important hotline and they started to.

00:33:07 Speaker 2

Discovered that women have no place to go to. It's not like here in Europe and the West and the US women can relocate. It's very hard in our area for women to relocate because if anyone sees her.

00:33:19 Speaker 2

Everyone donates information, people sometimes interfere in people's lives, or if she goes back simply, they would kill her or she would be harmed. So they started with her and she hotlines. And then they discovered that they needed shelters for that. So this came three years later. In the meantime, in 1996.

00:33:40 Speaker 2

The first female judge was appointed in Jordan before that people all females who would run for the sit for the exam to become judges, they.

00:33:48 Speaker 2

To fail, and I had lawyers who would tell me I didn't make any mistake. I'm sure I should have passed. They didn't let anyone pass it, only men. And then in 1996, by a political decision, they the first woman passed the exam. Now we have around 3300 female judges.

00:34:09 Speaker 2

We have one in the Court of Cassation. We have one who was head of the Judiciary Council, where they sit and have the exams. She headed the Judiciary Council for a while. So this is important now, recently maybe the last 10 years, we have female criminal.

00:34:24 Speaker 2

Tutors. This was also a post that wasn't for women. Also, now we have women who, you know, but not a lot compared to men, but they are women there. So this is important. Of course, in the justice system, we don't have women in the Sharia courts. We have a woman recently, maybe two years or three years ago, who was appointed in the church.

00:34:45 Speaker 2

The church court there was a woman appointed. We still do not have a woman in the Constitutional Court, but I mean, I'm sure one day we will have because there's a lot of things that have changed.

00:34:57 Speaker 2

Now, in 1996, because as I told you, there was no place for women to go. If woman is raped, they didn't know how to deal with her. And I'm sure it's the same here. In the past I read that police would tell her, you know, it's your fault or not a big deal. You were raped or whatever. So in 1996, they established the family.

00:35:18 Speaker 2

Section units. It was a unit in the beginning.

00:35:22 Speaker 2

To deal with women who are raped with children, child abuse, child molestation and.

00:35:31 Speaker 2

But then later on, they stopped receiving women for a while because they said their their claim was that, you know, there was no place to if a woman's life is in danger, where can we take her? Eventually things changed. It later changed to the family and Juvenile Protection Department. And there is a department in each of the 12.

00:35:52 Speaker 2

Now.

00:35:53 Speaker 2

And everybody knows about them. Like I I write court verdicts and if there's a case of molestation, it's I always read the family. Oh, somebody got molested and they informed their family and the family went and filed the complaint at the protection department. And this is important. They went to schools and everywhere to talk to children you know about.

00:36:13 Speaker 2

Molestation and so forth, and the need to report it.

00:36:18 Speaker 2

Now, in 1999, the Deliriums Union opened the first shelter. Of course, in the mid 90s, we urged the government as activists, to open a shelter for women. They refused. There was a funding of 1,000,000 that was going to be given by you and DP, I think. And the Minister of Social Development back then, she was a woman, she said no, I'm not going to open this shelter. They're going to say I opened the shelter.

00:36:40 Speaker 2

That's for prostitute and so forth. So they missed that opportunity. Then the women's movement opened their small shelter. It could house. Back then 12 women with their children.

00:36:50 Speaker 2

So this was important. This was the first time we became acknowledged. Known that, oh, we have shelters now in Jordan. At least two men can would not go back to their abusers. This was very important.

00:37:02 Speaker 2

Now, in 1999, it was the establishment of I told you, the Group of young men and women, the Jordan National Committee, to eliminate so-called honour crimes. We also prepared this document, this document. Basically it has names, ages and year, the names, ages and years of women who were killed for reasons related to family honour, and they all.

00:37:23 Speaker 2

I collected it from all the stories I reported.

00:37:26 Speaker 2

And we had one part this side, the names and the other side some information about the laws that we wanted to change and we would go and distribute it everywhere. It was. This was big back then, of course, because back then it was, I wouldn't say illegal. But, you know, if you distribute pamphlets without authorization.

00:37:46 Speaker 2

You could get in.

00:37:47 Speaker 2

Trouble.

00:37:48 Speaker 2

We didn't care. We were just we were going out in the streets and so.

00:37:54 Speaker 2

So in 1999, when King Abdullah became King, one of the first things is he held a meeting with the women's movement to hear about their demands, and this was important. To be honest, you know, because during the same time, he didn't meet with women. He now King Abdullah came. He was young, so it was important that we see he's.

00:38:13 Speaker 2

Reaching out, trying to see what people want, what demands.

00:38:18 Speaker 2

I'm talking about too many reached out. Too many people. Also not only, but I mean it was important for the.

00:38:22 Speaker 2

For.

00:38:22 Speaker 2

The women's movement now, as I said, because of the hotlines, because of the Jordanians shelter, because of the Police Department, they started to realise, no, we have a problem, we have to deal with the family, we have to, we have issues. We cannot keep hiding ourselves and saying, oh, we don't have putting our head in the sand.

00:38:38 Speaker 2

Saying we don't have anything. So the Queen Queen Rania held a meeting with the the specialists to talk about this issue and a year later they established the National Council for Family Affairs, which is now also dealing with cases of violence against women. So now we have many entities. Imagine from nothing.

00:38:57 Speaker 2

From nothing in the mid 90s there are organisations, be it government or non governmental, that are being born and worked. Now there were three laws that had a lot of issues in Jordan back in the 1990s and early 2000. Holler law, which is the divorce law.

00:39:17 Speaker 2

Then explain to you.

00:39:19 Speaker 2

Before night, 201 women who enjoyed and was impossible for them, and I think it's in all in the Arab world, even in Egypt, until they introduced the hollow in Egypt, women were finding it very hard to divorce their husbands. The Sharia law would not allow it, you know, even if she's beaten and everything, it was impossible for her to to.

00:39:41 Speaker 2

So there were a lot of cases of hard cases of whereby women could not, you know, and then the man would meet up his wife or he would marry a second wife and she cannot. She's 4. She's stuck with him, you know? So there were a lot of humanitarian and hard

cases. And the women's movement kept kept pushing for that. So they introduced a law that is.

00:40:00 Speaker 2

The hollow which is.

00:40:03 Speaker 2

Based on a story that happened with the Prophet, peace be upon him. A woman came to divorce her husband. He said OK, if you're a divorce his husband, give him back in the garden. He gave you and I would die.

00:40:13 Speaker 2

So the women's movement relied on that, OK. Hey, wait. We have a story here that happened, so let's use that. And they changed it. But it was a big, big hassle and battle in the Parliament and everything is in the book. You can read about it, how the, who's against it, who's with it? That's the hollow then we have.

00:40:32 Speaker 2

Raising the age of marriage from 15 to 18, this was also a big deal, you know? No, we want to keep at 15. Once the girl reaches puberty, then she should get married. Blah, blah, blah. Eventually, they raised their age, but still they put exceptions.

00:40:48 Speaker 2

And the exceptions? They're still women married for these exceptions. But now, before it used to be like if there were 70,000 marriages a year, 10,000 would be the exceptions. Now it's 6000, and now they're putting more restrictions and more monitoring. But I mean it's it's still a.

00:41:07 Speaker 2

Problem amending Article 340 of the JSP Code which I told you the the article that offers leniency to killers.

00:41:14 Speaker 2

They amended that article. It's now wasn't the right article, but it's it. It was OK. It's one of the articles. So they amended that article, but there was a big battle in the Parliament. It was a, you know, and there was the women's. The women from the Islamic Action Front were against us and everyone, it was a big, big battle. And they were like, you know, you want to destroy the morals of the society. You want to destroy us.

00:41:37 Speaker 2



They want to cancel Architect 340, so women would go out and sleep with whoever they want. It was really a circus, you know, it was. And it's very sad because the parliamentarians were basically accusing women of.

00:41:50 Speaker 2

Bad things. They're talking about their mother's wives, sisters, daughters. You know, it was really bad back then. It's a battle. And so they were changed in a temporary law. The Parliament didn't vote. They waited until the parliament was not in session. There was no Parliament and they passed many temporary laws and these were.

00:42:12 Speaker 2

Part of them later on they became part of the law, but it was a battle of around 20 years.

00:42:18 Speaker 2

Now, in 2000, there was an important thing, and now, since I'm in the UK, I can tell you it's a UK project because it's always, you know, wherever I lecture it's it's not in the UK. So they had a five year project whereby they trained judges, criminal prosecutors, forensics, everyone working in the family domain and the health sector.

00:42:37 Speaker 2

On how to deal with victims, how to deal with victims of rape, how to deal with the abuse, how to detect a murder.

00:42:45 Speaker 2

If someone comes and says, oh, it's an accident, no, you know, so this was very important because really this changed also the attitude of judges, criminal prosecutors on how they approached family affairs. They started to realise it's not something in turn or no, it's our job. We are here to protect the family. We are here to interfere and protect and not to say, oh, it's a family issue.

00:43:06 Speaker 2

So this was a very important project that happened in Jordan now in two or three. Remember I told you in 93 to Jan Faisal won the first woman in Jordan.

00:43:19 Speaker 2

After that 2 elections. After that, no woman won. She ran again. They she lost because.

00:43:27 Speaker 2

The government didn't like her after that. No woman won until then, two or three, they decided to do supporter for women and we had six women. The women's movement six, six women's movement asked for 12:00, but they own whatever we ask. It's always.

00:43:41 Speaker 2

Half.

00:43:41 Speaker 2

If I was back then older, I would say just ask for 30 they give.

00:43:45 Speaker 2

US15.

00:43:48 Speaker 2

Later, the seats were increased to 12, then 15 and now we have a new parallel system. I will tell you more about it later. The court reasons, as I said in the past, you can only vote one for one person. It's not like here you have a party.

00:44:04 Speaker 2

You have you.

00:44:05 Speaker 2

Can vote. It's a system here, but I can't.

00:44:07 Speaker 2

The sun myself. But anyway, so people would always prefer to vote for a man or of their choice.

00:44:17 Speaker 2

Of course we had a problem that women did not support women. They also prefer to vote for someone from their family. Women do not have money like men, so that's a problem. Until this day. And I think it's worldwide. It's not only for women. And as I said, you know, there's a they they expect from male representatives to do things for them. Women cannot do.

00:44:36 Speaker 2

So these were the reasons. This is something I always like to highlight, which is football, because I think it's very important. I was in the Jordan Football Federation. Prince Ali brought me from 2:09 until 2:18.

00:44:50 Speaker 2

And I didn't put this here because I was, you know, in the federation. But I put it because I think it was very important that the the programme started before I came to the to the federation. But the Prince brought me to push it forward as an activist, as a feminist and so forth. But because I believe that football breaks a lot of social taboos, breaks a lot of.

00:45:12 Speaker 2

We're even in the world until this day. You know, men think, oh, women shouldn't play football. So imagine in the Middle East. Now we started with few teams. Now we have age ages like under 19 under 17. The national team. We have clubs and now some players they go and some of them are playing in Saudi Arabia.

00:45:31 Speaker 2

You know, in Saudi Arabia now they have football in the in the United Arab Emirates, so now they're trying to spread the game of football worldwide and the the thing about football, I'm sure you all know is that anyone can play football.

00:45:43 Speaker 2

For example, I played basketball. It was mostly the middle class where you can buy your shoes. You can get a shirt. You can if if the federation doesn't give you. But here you know it's anyone plays football because the poor, the rich. So we had all kinds of women, all kinds of backgrounds.

00:46:03 Speaker 2

You know, I would go like I used to go and had delegations and, you know, go with my team and the bus and I would see women from all sectors. Women would fully covered who would come and say bye to their daughters, to people just.

00:46:16 Speaker 2

Not, you know, without head starts or anything. So it was a mix up, Christians, Muslim. So this was very important because it's a mixture mixture of cultures, mixture of classes and they played football and it was women playing football. So this was very important in remember I told you we were asking for a.

00:46:35 Speaker 2

Shelter.

00:46:36 Speaker 2

In the 90s.

00:46:37 Speaker 2

It took them until 27, so around 10 years to open the first government run shelter.

00:46:43 Speaker 2

And even when they opened the shelter, they were afraid from the word shelter.

00:46:48 Speaker 2

So they say changed it to the family Reconciliation Centre, which is OK as long as they open the shelter, it's open. It's working in two ways. The Family Protection law was passed, of course, in the Criminal Code, Penal Code. I'm sorry, it doesn't. It doesn't handle the.

00:47:08 Speaker 2

A lot of cases related to family virus, so they introduced this family protection law, but unfortunately it's not applied strongly still still.

00:47:19 Speaker 2

Getting there 208, we have two.

00:47:21 Speaker 2

25 we.

00:47:22

Get there.

00:47:24 Speaker 2

In 208, the appointment of the first female governor in Jordan, it was important. Also, we have a female governor first time.

00:47:32 Speaker 2

Between two or seven 209 Jordan married to non Jordanians and their families organised multiple movements to demand citizenship rights. The one here on top is she's died, unfortunately of cancer. But she was the leader of this movement, you know Jordan women married to non Jordanians cannot pass on the citizenship to their husbands or children.

00:47:52 Speaker 2

And this has been a dilemma for the longest.

00:47:54 Speaker 2

Time.

00:47:55 Speaker 2

Because they were treated, they were treated as they were treated. As you know, foreigners, they had to go and register every year they had to pay residency, they couldn't get a licence driver licence. They couldn't enrol in. So this was a dilemma. For the longest time, but things later on changed. We'll talk about it later.

00:48:16 Speaker 2

But it's I wanted to point it out because this is very important. The citizenship right is very important.

00:48:23 Speaker 2

Now we go to the 2/10 the so-called Arab Spring, I think affected the entire Arab world. The women's movement. Unfortunately, the women's demands were pushed back, and now it's more about safety, security. I want to save my regime. I want to save my country. I want to maintain stability and security. So for a while there was they. They were affected.

00:48:43 Speaker 2

Nevertheless, the king and the queen met with women's leaders, which is also again a big deal because, as I said before, that the leadership didn't, you know, you know, didn't meet with the women movement. So it was important.

00:48:57 Speaker 2

Women's groups also were heavily involved, along with international organisations and the government in helping the Syrian refugees when they came to Jordan, they immediately jumped in, offering, you know, their services, legal aid, all kinds of until this day. There's there's women's groups, women's NGO's, they have.

00:49:17 Speaker 2

Places in the in the refugee camps to help women, refugees and children, refugees on all aspects, in addition to, of course, honour UNHCR, all these you know they have and the government of Jordan and did a lot for refugees. So there was. But you know it's a it's a big number and there's a lot.

00:49:34 Speaker 2

Things to do so yeah, this was very important.

00:49:39 Speaker 2

Now in 214, the government after in 207 when this woman opened by the way, that woman opened the Facebook page to demand citizenship. Right? They closed it. Somebody closed it. She opened another one. They closed it. She opened another one. Anyway, it took them until 2:14 to finally the government gave them privilege.

00:50:00 Speaker 2

Not citizenship. Until now, we don't. They can't have a citizenship, but privileges, you know, you can have a driver's licence, you can own blah, blah. You know, all these privileges. And of course they it wasn't applied immediately. They it took another two years. The government entities didn't recognise it. Even if the government.

00:50:18 Speaker 2

It took a while, but eventually now it's different.

00:50:22 Speaker 2

In 215, the government formed the Interministerial Committee for Women Empowerment, so this is very important. Also, they do all kinds of activities for women. See there is more and more entities doing all kinds of things for women.

00:50:35 Speaker 2

In 215, the law, the election law was amended to have 15 seats, and in that year or the year after, when the elections happened, 20 women won, not 15. There were five women who won outside the quota because the society became more now is becoming more convinced of women's performance in the Parliament now.

00:50:55 Speaker 2

In two in in 217, the Parliament voted to cancel Article 308 and amend article 98308 used to to to offer pardon for a person who sexually assault a teenager or a woman.

00:51:10 Speaker 2

If the if, if the person marries his victim, then there is no punishment and this was also in other countries in the region. So this was a big problem and the women's movement have been calling for that for 20 years to cancel this article.

00:51:25 Speaker 2

Finally, it was cancelled because it's a big problem for women. How can you marry your \*\*\*\*\*? You know, how can you marry? So this was cancelled. Article 98 used to offer leniency to persons who killed their female relatives in the name of fame.

00:51:38 Speaker 2

Honour this was also amended whereby now they cannot benefit from any reduction in penalty. Of course there was a lot of the the, the judiciary also has dealt with this issue seriously starting in mid 2000, the judiciary also the the courts also started to pass on more tough punishments.

00:51:58 Speaker 2

But now it's on paper, so this was very important.

00:52:03 Speaker 2

In 218, Prime Minister Amir Rezaz appointed 7 women. It was the first time in the kingdom's history we have 7 females in the cabinet. This was a big deal, I think in the UK it's normal for you right in 213.

00:52:22 Speaker 2

Sorry, 223 Prime Minister Michael Hassane, also appointed 72nd Minister to appoint. So this is important when you have a lot of women in the cabinet now, the so-called owner killings, if you know, you know what, you know what the so-called honour killing right? Do I need to tell you, OK, if a female's life is in danger.

00:52:43 Speaker 2

The the government used to put them in prison to protect them. If a woman is they try to kill survives, she goes to prison. If a woman decides to leave the house now, not all women are talking certain certain class, certain background. She leaves the house and they she is caught. They put her in prison. So the family would not.

00:53:03 Speaker 2

Kill her. So there have been women there, spending 1012 years wasting their young life, their life behind bars without any charge, and they cannot release themselves because the government wants to.

00:53:16 Speaker 2

Of course, when in the mid 90s we were calling for a shelter, the word shelter, that is a taboo.

00:53:23 Speaker 2

They didn't allow, they didn't open the shelter. The shelters idea was to include these women when they opened their family reconciliation house in 207. They didn't include these women. So these women stayed in prison until we had a female minister who is in the middle.

00:53:38 Speaker 2

Hala Latouf, who opened the first shelter for women. This was very important because now women are no longer staying in prison. They are, you know, putting in them in this shelter. It's a different lifestyle. They don't mix up with prisoners. They wake up whenever they want. They it's a. It's like a safe house. You know what a safe house?

00:53:58 Speaker 2

So this is very important.

00:54:02 Speaker 2

In 219.

00:54:04 Speaker 2

We had the first woman whose director of.

00:54:09 Speaker 2

Legislation on Opinion Bureau at the Prime Minister. This is very important because this this, this Bureau is where all the laws that comes, they want to the government wants to change the law and then take it to the Parliament. It goes through the.

00:54:24 Speaker 2

So this is also a very important post for women back then. Yeah. I mean, it was also, you see, there's more women assuming things in Jordan now in the twenty 20's, the parliament passed amendments to the Jordanian constitution, adding the word Jordanian men and women to the title of the 2nd chapter. Before that, it was only men.

00:54:44 Speaker 2

And the women's movement said, please let's add the word sex so that you would say, OK, the constitution is for all they kept saying no, no, no, no. Eventually they added this. But so far we don't know the effects. Is it going to work? What is it going to reflect? But at least it was added again on paper.

00:55:04 Speaker 2

Of course, in 2023, the women's movement was very active in doing all kinds of activities in terms of collecting donation. Everyone in Jordan. But I'm talking the women's movement in specific doing activities to collecting money, donations for people in Raza.

00:55:23 Speaker 2

I'm talking about the atrocities of the war again, as I said, I told you about the elections. Now they change the elections law. They put a lot of conditions, such as the political parties. They have to have at least 20% members, women, female members. They they were calling for inclusion, they they changed the whole.

00:55:44 Speaker 2

Structure of election which resulted in 27 women winning, which is very important, including 18 via quarter since this is important now you see there is from nothing to 1 nothing.

00:55:58 Speaker 2

612.

00:56:00 Speaker 2

15/20/27 so this is very important. I mean to have women in the Parliament, this is very important and just before I came here, I think 2 two weeks ago the government introduced the 20, the strategy social protection strategy.



00:56:21 Speaker 2

This is very important because this is going to cover everything related to via anything, anything related to the well-being of people, the violence. So now it's it's becoming a big thing and the government is becoming more involved.

00:56:36 Speaker 2

You know, when I was working, one of my main aims back then was to have the government acknowledge that we have a problems in so-called honour killings and the government wouldn't acknowledge eventually it took them 10 to 15 years to acknowledge that we have a problem. And when the government acknowledges there is a problem, it becomes their responsibility.

00:56:58 Speaker 2

To safely to find measures to secure the safety and security of its citizens and women and children in Jordan.

00:57:07 Speaker 2

There are some challenges, of course. Still, the citizenship rights the women's movement is constantly attacked. There's restrictions on NGOs, there's lack of funding, lack, lack of unity among the women's.

00:57:20 Speaker 2

Movement.

00:57:21 Speaker 2

But as I always say to everyone.

00:57:26 Speaker 2

I never, never thought that a lot of these things would change during my lifetime.

00:57:31 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:57:39 Speaker 1

In your lifetime, you've really witnessed a revolution.

00:57:41

Yes.

00:57:43 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:57:44 Speaker 1

And you've been a part of that revolution by bringing the focus to the issues that most harmed the interests of women. You had to start with the most basic of gaining respect in the law.

00:57:55 Speaker 2

Exactly.

00:57:56 Speaker 1

And then to try and get political voice. But I'd like to focus. I'll take the first couple of questions and open up to the floor on the evolution that you describe in women's role, not just in voting.

00:58:07 Speaker 1

But in running for Parliament, you start with Turgenev Faisal. Yes. So Tujan was a very flamboyant political figure.

00:58:16 Speaker 2

She's a liberal woman. She's she's a journalist, by the way. She's a.

00:58:20 Speaker 1

Some of the best.

00:58:21 Speaker 1

People are, yeah.

00:58:23 Speaker 1

Was tujan as the first woman elected to parliament a a positive development or a -1? I'm thinking about the publicity that the the battles with you know.

00:58:36 Speaker 1

Ahmeda with liberty.

00:58:37 Speaker 2

Yeah. No, there was one before.

00:58:39 Speaker 2

There was 1 when she the first went to the parliament, there was a deputy who told her, oh, if you were the Islamic dress, I will give you to bed 10 robes or something. And she slammed them, of course she told them I don't interfere in your what you wear? Why? Why are you interfering in my what I wear? And of course she did. She was. She was.

00:59:00 Speaker 2

She faced a lot of resistance. She she was the only woman with with 79 males. Imagine how hard it is for her to be among these.

00:59:10 Speaker 2

She did fight for women's rights, but not, you know, she was fighting for national national issues, for political issues. But she was a fighter for women's rights as well. And I I do respect her for that. But imagine, put yourself back then. It was, you know, the first woman. It was always impossible to see women in the Parliament.

00:59:29 Speaker 2

So all eyes were on her for me. I think she had an important and successful experience because she, you know, she was fighting for the right things and she was respected by people.

00:59:42 Speaker 2

But later on, I think later on she she put herself in trouble. Some people said that she shouldn't have and some people said no, she's for me. I find her a hero.

00:59:51 Speaker 2

For me, she's.

00:59:52 Speaker 1

My hero, then we're going to leave her on a pedestal as a hero. But we note that when she finished her term in office, it was a while before women got elected to Parliament again, and when women returned to Parliament.

01:00:04 Speaker 1

It's after the imposition of a quota. So my question is that quota was controversial.

01:00:06 Speaker 2

Yes.

01:00:10 Speaker 2

Yeah, of course.

01:00:11 Speaker 1

And many people argue that a quota is the wrong way for women.

01:00:14 Speaker 1

To enter politics.

01:00:15 Speaker 1

But maybe in Jordan at that moment it was a necessary stage. So could you tell us how the response to the introduction of a quota?

01:00:26 Speaker 2

Yeah, people. People were divided by, I think the women's movement called for the quota and we wanted the temporary quota. It wasn't like we knew the women's movement knew that it's not the solution because it might bring someone who's against women. And that's what happened. That's what happened. Because when they voted for the three laws, I showed you the whole of the the.

01:00:26 Speaker 1

Chang's living.

01:00:47 Speaker 2

The age and the article 340.

01:00:51 Speaker 2

Of course, in addition to the chaos in the Parliament, there were six women, OK, two of them are were two. Two of them were affiliated to Islamic Action Front and there were four others. OK? Anyway, when the decisive session because they voted against it, went to the Senate.

01:01:10 Speaker 2

The Senate said no. We want these articles. It went back to the parliament and in the decisive session.

01:01:17 Speaker 2

These two women from the Islamic Action Front voted against the law.

01:01:22 Speaker 2

They were two women present and.

01:01:24 Speaker 2

Two women didn't show up.

01:01:26 Speaker 2

And the the low fell by 5. So if these women voted for and the other two women showed up, it would or something they would have passed. So they it was the difference. They made the difference and the vote. The law didn't pass. It passed. Later on as a temporary law. As I told you, after the Parliament was resolved.

01:01:44 Speaker 2

And they were always they're always against against anything related to women and children that they're always sceptical. They I was accused by them. Now I see them I say hi and everything but they accuse me personally of being a you know a Western agent you know that you know we're doing something against traditions and there's nothing against traditions and norms.

01:02:05 Speaker 2

Don't tell me no religion in the world says go and kill no religion.

01:02:08 Speaker 2

You know, we're gonna come back.

01:02:09 Speaker 1

To that, but I wanna say the issue about the empowerment of women in Parliament and the role of quotas on that, and my last question on that.

01:02:10 Speaker 2

OK.

01:02:14

Yes.

01:02:18 Speaker 1

Is.

01:02:19 Speaker 1

The development you tell us is that actually women begin to get elected above and beyond the quota.

01:02:26 Speaker 2

Yes, yes.

01:02:27 Speaker 1

Which seems to suggest that the acceptance of women's place in public life and political life.

01:02:33 Speaker 1

Was a frontier that was crossed and and that now the logic is a good candidate is elected. Yes, male or female, yes is.

01:02:42 Speaker 2

That true? Well, you see, The thing is that there's always this the eyes out on women, you know, but.

01:02:48 Speaker 2

Then there are men who.

01:02:48 Speaker 2

Are not also very active or.

01:02:51 Speaker 2

You know, they don't do anything. Some of them sit in the Parliament, do not nothing but the eyes are always on women. Unfortunately, we also had women who, as I said against women's rights, there are women who didn't do anything. But there are women who were very vocal other than to Jean Faisal. There were other women. One of them now is she's the Minister of Social Development.

01:03:10 Speaker 2

She was very many, Mustafa. She was very, very vocal. She's a lawyer. She knew her. How to say what she was doing. She knew everything. She's smart. She fought for many things inside the parliament. She was vocal.

01:03:25 Speaker 2

Unfortunately, we lost her as an MP, but she's a social development minister and she's doing also a lot of good things for women and children and for the society. So there are some who are really good, just like men. You have some who are good, who are always.

01:03:42 Speaker 2

Who's always bother, you know? And there are some who just sitting there doing nothing. You know, it's all over the parliament and some of them are sleeping. You see them everywhere in the in the world, you see MP's sleeping you.

01:03:53 Speaker 1

See, I mean but I want reason for optimism. And the thing I take with your lecture. I know your lecture told me a story about how women transcended.

01:03:53 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:03:56 Speaker 2

I am on the listen.

01:03:59 Speaker 2

Yes.

01:04:01 Speaker 1

Career and are getting more and more successful. Is that a fair assessment or am I making a Hollywood happy ending?

01:04:06 Speaker 2

Yes, I mean, yes, there, there is a lot of other things that I didn't mention because now I mean for example, we have women directing the traffic female officers before we now it's in 20 years or so before. No way on Earth, no way they started with one or two. We have now female the traffic officers on.

01:04:26 Speaker 2

Yes, no way. Before in the army we have females who fly F16 or whatever. Now the flights, the planes are. Yes, I was going to put them into the presentation, but I didn't want to bore you with all these. I mean, these are like still small things.

01:04:34 Speaker 1

Really amazing.

01:04:41 Speaker 2

But they're very important.

01:04:42

Yeah, of course.

01:04:45 Speaker 1

Runner, we've run out of time.

01:04:47 Speaker 1

This is going to happen.

01:04:47 Speaker 2

Didn't he?

01:04:51 Speaker 1

I can only say that you have brought such knowledge to your audience as you have glory to the Devaki Jaya Jane lecture series by what you shared with us today and which you have done in the books that.

01:05:00 Speaker 2

My pleasure.

01:05:04 Speaker 1

You have written.

01:05:05 Speaker 1

So it only remains for you to join me in expressing our warmest thanks to Ronda Hasini.

01:05:14

Thank you.

01:05:15 Speaker 1

Thanks, Darlene. I was guess you've been.

01:05:17 Speaker 1

Following online, thanks good night and thank you.