



# News Feed

American attorney Kimberley Motley defends Afghans and expats accused of crimes in Kabul

## AFGHANISTAN THE BEST DEFENSE

As the first foreign litigator working in Afghanistan's criminal courts, Kimberley Motley risks her life to ensure justice is served

By FEIFEI SUN

**LIKE MANY CRIMINAL** attorneys, Kimberley Motley, 40, has endured prison riots and death threats. But as the only non-Afghan practicing law in the country's criminal courts, Motley has the added challenge of doing such work in a culture that devalues women and is skeptical of outsiders. Now, *Motley's Law*, a documentary directed by Nicole Horanyi making the rounds at film festivals, follows her as she splits time between Kabul and her home in the U.S., where her husband and kids live, fighting for justice for those accused of everything from bribery to murder, and challenging backward traditions along the way.

**MARIE CLAIRE: What first brought you to Kabul?**

**KIMBERLEY MOTLEY:** I went as a contractor to train Afghan attorneys in 2008. At first, it was about the money. I had been working in the Milwaukee public defender's office—as a mother of three with a lot of student debt. I earned triple the money in Afghanistan. But then I realized how great the need was. So in 2009, I opened my own practice in Kabul.

**MC: Why do you stay?**

**KM:** A lot of people come to me in very desperate

**BY THE NUMBERS:** AS THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM WRAPS IN DAVOS, WE LOOK AT NEW RESEARCH SHOWING THAT IF THERE WAS GENDER PARITY IN THE WORKFORCE, WE'D ALL WIN TRILLIONS: **50%** PORTION OF THE WORLD'S WORKING-AGE POPULATION THAT IS FEMALE

HELLE MOOSMADE IN COPENHAGEN. BY THE NUMBERS SOURCE: "THE POWER OF PARITY," MCKINSEY GLOBAL INSTITUTE, SEPTEMBER 2015

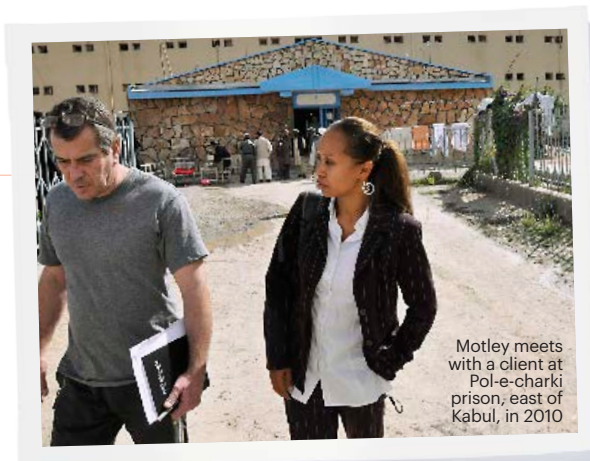
situations, and it's hard to turn them away. I recently met with a woman whose husband put an ax in her head. The police were only *thinking* about questioning him before I got involved.

**MC: Tell us about your new initiative, The Justness Project.**

**KM:** The Justness Project is a means to give the laws back to the people. Many forget the laws belong to them—they're just as important as the air we breathe. I want to create a blueprint for how I have tackled human rights cases, so people can learn from my experiences. I'm also working on a website where people can look up the laws of their country in their native language, and I'm launching a comic-book series so we can educate kids on the law.

**MC: What is the most meaningful case you've tried?**

**KM:** I would say Sahar Gul, a teenage bride who was tortured by her husband and his family. Knowing where she was when we first met—a shy, damaged girl—to watching her speak up for herself in front of the Supreme Court made me very proud. [Her in-laws were sentenced to 10 years; her husband fled.] If I had to pick a case to end my career on, that'd be the one.



**MC: You were in Kabul's Serena Hotel in 2014 when Taliban gunmen killed nine people. Did the attack make you doubt your decision to do this work?**

**KM:** I didn't doubt what I was doing, but for a moment, I doubted how long I had been doing it—I had only planned to be in Kabul for a year. But in my work, violence is an everyday reality, so I don't think about it. If I did, I wouldn't be able to operate.

**MC: You once marched up to President Hamid Karzai's residential palace to get him to sign a pardon. Tell us about that case.**

**KM:** Gulnaz, a teenage girl, was raped and impregnated by her cousin's husband. The police charged her with adultery but said she might be able to go free if she married her attacker. I got her sentence reduced from 12 years

to three—and the court said she should not have to marry her rapist. Then, I went to Karzai's palace with documents for him to

pardon her. His guards told me I couldn't be there, but eventually they took the papers to him. It was the first time Karzai issued a pardon for moral crimes. The news wrote about that, but what they didn't write about as much is that two other rape victims were also released that day. It's a long journey, but we're making progress.

**MC: Recent headlines say the Taliban is gaining momentum again. What have you seen?**

**KM:** I feel the tension on the ground. Not at the magnitude it's being reported at, but I do feel more insecure. Still, I'm very optimistic about Afghanistan. We hear a lot about the bad stuff, but there are good things—more girls going to school, more female Army captains—happening there, too.

## CAMBODIA SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Ending violence against women starts with a swipe

**NEARLY ONE IN** four Cambodian women has been the victim of violence. A new program from The Asia Foundation is hoping to change that by empowering women in the Southeast Asian nation to curb such attacks by designing apps that could improve all of their lives. "Many women here don't know that they can live free from violence," says program manager Erin Bourgeois. Now, thanks to these winning ideas, they will.



**Sreytouch Phat, 29**  
*Creator of 7 Plus*

As a beer promoter who persuaded men to drink certain brands, Phat witnessed a lot of bad behavior. "Women are often abused or harassed by customers, or even the restaurant owners, but they dare not fight back," she says. Her app educates food and beverage service workers on workplace harassment and legal recourse.



**Dany Sum, 23**  
*Creator of Krousar Koumrou*

Sum says that many Cambodians don't know they can seek help when a family member is abusive. "A lot of people don't even know what 'violence' [looks like]," she says. Which is why, instead of words, her app uses animated videos to teach women about domestic violence laws, their legal rights, and victim support services.



**Rachana Bunn, 34**  
*Creator of Safe Agent 008*

In the sprawling capital city of Phnom Penh, Bunn says, "Women are not safe in public spaces." Her app allows women to notify family and friends of their location with GPS coordinates, to sound an alarm if they feel threatened, and to report harassment and abuse discreetly—a potential lifesaver for women in any setting. —Kristi Eaton

BY THE  
NUMBERS  
CONTINUED

**\$28**  
TRILLION

AMOUNT ADDED TO GLOBAL GDP IF THERE WAS GENDER PARITY IN THE WORKFORCE

**37%**

PORTION OF THE GLOBAL GDP NOW GENERATED BY WOMEN

**42%**

COUNTRIES THAT HAVE "HIGH" OR "EXTREMELY HIGH" GENDER INEQUALITY

## GENIUS!

ONE WOMAN,  
ONE BRILLIANT IDEA



**EMILY MAY**  
Squad goal:  
Quash the  
online haters

**HER INSPIRATION**  
In the decade Emily May, 34, has run *Hollaback!*, an anti-street-harassment organization, her team has been consistently attacked online—called “vengeful lesbians” and “stupid as hell.” They receive 2,500 such comments each year, which May says sit with her like “lead weights.”

**HER BIG IDEA**  
To fill the Web with more love—and help the 40 percent of Web users who are harassed—May created *HeartMob*, a website to provide real-time aid to victims. When an attack is reported, *HeartMob* volunteers send messages of support, while May’s team documents the abuse, provides resources, and reports known bullies to sites like Twitter.

**RESULTS**  
*HeartMob* launched in January, after raising \$20,000 on Kickstarter. May hopes it helps victims feel less alone. “When you’re harassed, those voices are so loud in your head,” she says. “For people to come forward with love and say, ‘We’re louder,’ is a beautiful thing.”  
—Heather Furlow



Pro-life and pro-choice activists rally outside the Supreme Court in January 2015

## UNITED STATES

# THE WAR AGAINST ABORTION

A new film shows what’s at stake in the battle for reproductive rights

**IN 2013, WHEN** Dawn Porter learned there was only one abortion clinic left in Mississippi, she immediately picked up the phone. “You learn as a filmmaker that if something strikes you, go after it right away,” she says. She went to the clinic that day to meet Dr. Willie Parker, who flies to the state from his home in Chicago to perform abortions. Three years later, *TRAPPED*, Porter’s documentary about abortion access in the South, premiered at this year’s Sundance Film Festival.

*TRAPPED* could not be more timely. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case this spring that could determine abortion access for decades to come by deciding if state restrictions on abortion place an “undue burden” on women who wish to terminate pregnancies. At stake is a Texas law passed in 2013 that requires abortion doctors to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital and abortion clinics to have facilities equal to outpatient surgical centers. The law

would close about 75 percent of Texas’ abortion clinics, leaving fewer than 10 to care for the state’s 13 million women.

Such laws, known as TRAP laws (or “targeted regulation of abortion providers”), are the subject of Porter’s film, which also features clinics in Texas and Alabama trying to keep their doors open as legislatures chip away at their ability to do so. “It’s about how extremist groups can work through the democratic system to take away rights from others,” the filmmaker, 49, says. “The antichoice movement has been very successful in crafting laws that make shutting down clinics seem reasonable.” But fewer clinics means more strife for women who want to end pregnancies, like one woman Porter met who took a 10-hour bus ride across Alabama to find a clinic. “It’s a crisis of access,” Porter says. “It doesn’t matter if you have a right—there’s no way to access that right if there are no clinics open.” —Jennifer Chowdhury

## UNITED STATES

# PERIOD PIECE

This tax makes our blood boil!

**VIAGRA IS FREE** from sales tax in Georgia, Ohio, and Colorado; tampons and sanitary pads are not. New York state also taxes period products, but not Rogaine. What gives? States tax items deemed to be “nonessential,” like electronics, but most don’t tax necessities, like food. And though the UN says exercising menstrual hygiene is a human right, all but five states classify period products as nonessential or “luxury” goods. Tired of being nicked-and-dimed for simply having a period (as if we have a choice!), women are pushing back. Petitions calling for an end to the tax in California and Florida have netted thousands of signatures,

and in New York, Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal introduced a bill to end the state’s tax. “Menstruating is not voluntary or cosmetic; it’s a medical necessity,” she says. “Why should you pay taxes on something that’s necessary to handle it?”

Women in the rest of the world are fired up, too. After a petition got more than 74,000 signatures, the Canadian government voted to end its tax in July; a similar proposal is gaining traction in Malaysia. In the U.K., though, a petition with 250,000 signatures failed to sway the government, which voted against removing its tax in November. Women protested by free-bleeding in white pants outside Parliament. “The petition didn’t work, so we decided to bleed on their doorstep,” says activist Charlie Edge, 22, of Berkshire. That ought to show lawmakers tampons are anything but a luxury. —Claire Trageser

**75%** PORTION OF GLOBAL UNPAID WORK DONE BY WOMEN

**\$10 TRILLION** ESTIMATED MONETARY VALUE PER YEAR OF UNPAID WORK BY WOMEN

**240M** NUMBER OF WORKERS ADDED IF WOMEN PARTICIPATED EQUALLY IN THE WORKFORCE