This book focuses on the socio-political environment that allows for the impactful work of NGOs through their proximity to local communities. The book showcases how this space has helped South African women’s rights NGOs to bring about crucial legal reforms, which are quite relevant to women’s lived realities. Recognising its limitations, the South African state encourages NGOs to work freely on the ground and with state institutions to ameliorate the conditions for women’s rights. The outcome of this state–NGO dynamic can be seen in the numerous human rights gains achieved by NGOs in general, and by women’s rights organisations specifically. In addition, vulnerable communities such as women living under customary law have a significantly better chance to access justice. The book then demonstrates the opposite scenario, using Egypt as a case study, where NGOs are viewed as a national threat, and consequently operate under restrictive rules.

Reem Wael is a social science researcher with a geographic focus on the Middle East and Africa. She co-founded the first gender consulting firm in the Middle East to focus on research and policy, trainings and media; she worked on numerous research projects on gender cross-cutting with health, education, data and information, law, and violence. In her most recent full-time position, Reem was the Executive Director of HarassMap, an NGO based in Egypt, using an online–offline integrated approach to end social acceptability of sexual harassment in Egypt. She holds a PhD from the University of London, where she conducted socio-legal analysis on gender-based violence in South Africa.
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NEGOTIATING THE POWER OF NGOs

Women’s Legal Rights in South Africa

Reem Wael
HarassMap, Egypt, Africa
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On a personal level, no one has given me more than my parents Nabila and Wael who have supported me in a prosperous career, and continue to do so.
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The following table is a list of selected cases and laws relevant to the topic on the local, regional and international level, many of which are used in the book.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADEW      Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women
ADR      alternative dispute resolution
ANC      African National Congress
ANCWL      ANC Women’s League
BIA      Board of Immigration Appeals
BNWLA      Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association
CALS      Centre for Applied Legal Studies
CBOs      community-based organisations
CEDAW      Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEWLA      Centre for Egyptian Women’s Legal Assistance
CGE      Commission on Gender Equality
CPA      Criminal Procedure Act
CRC      Convention on the Rights of the Child
DVA      Domestic Violence Act
DRC      Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHR      European Court of Human Rights
EGP      Egyptian Pounds
FGM      female genital mutilation
FSAW      Federation of South African Women
GBV      gender-based violence
ICCPR      International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICD      Independent Complaints Directory
ICESCR      International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IJS      informal justice systems
IPID      Independent Police Investigative Directorate
JASA      Justice Alliance of South Africa
JSC      Judicial Service Commission
KZN      Kwazulu-Natal
ABBREVIATIONS

LAB       Legal Aid Board
LRC       Legal Resource Centre
MOSS      Ministry of Social Solidarity
NCW       National Council for Women
NGO       nongovernmental organisation
NPO       Nonprofit Organisations Act
PIL       public interest litigation
PO        Protection Order
RAPCAN    Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
SAA       South African Airlines
SADTU     South African Democratic Teachers’ Union
SALC      South African Law Commission
SAPS      South African Police Service
SCA       Supreme Court of Appeals
SOA       Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 2007
TAC       Treatment Action Campaign
TLAC      The Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre
UK        United Kingdom
UN        United Nations
USA       United States of America
USD       United States of America Dollars
VA W      violence against women
WLC       Women’s Legal Centre
WNC       Women’s National Coalition