Inas Kamal Al-Deen Ramadan, a journalist at “Roz al Yousef” magazine recently awarded by the Media Diversity Institute (MDI), was interviewed by the national TV in Egypt.

Appearing on the prime-time TV programme "On the name of Egypt", Inas discussed her award winning article about the willingness of some Egyptian girls to be enrolled at military academies in fields of infantry, air force and special forces just like men, and not only in the medical services and the media. Her article “Let high heels go to hell, long live the military boots” was published in “Roz al Yousef” magazine in December 2013 and won MDI award for the ‘Best Article on Women in Society’.

Not only that Inas Kamal Al-Deen Ramadan was a guest of the prominent TV program hosted by Hossam El Sokkari, Mamoun Fendi and Kaswaa Al-Khelali, but she had an opportunity to choose the other guests in the
two of the girls that are willing to enrol in the Egyptian military, founders of a facebook page that demands that they are allowed to join all fields of the military academies, as well as a military expert. They were Dina Ashour, Faculty of commerce graduate and a boxing champion, and Gehad Al-Komy that nicknamed among her friends as “First Lt. Gehad”, in addition to Major General Farid Hagag.

The discussion started by showing a visual report on the views of the Egyptian street regarding the idea of enrolment of girls in the military, and it eventually reflected the refusal of the majority to the idea.

“We say military men, and not military girls” and “girls are weak and will not be able to resist the harshness of the military” were some of the opinions raised. To these kind of arguments Dina Ashur responded by saying "men and women are equal in loving their countries and in the desire to defend them".

Dina and other Egyptian girls insisted on opening all fields to women by sending written petitions and requests to the ministry of defense and other military affiliates in Egypt, yet no response was given.

“The women is a human, and the man is a human, so what is the difference?”, Dina elaborated saying that she is very serious about joining the special forces, air force, and parachuting forces and that she is capable of doing so because she was trained in boxing three times a day while fasting.
As a response, Major General Farid Hagag clarified that there are available vacancies for women in the military in the field of nursing, medicine, and psychological therapy, but more than that is not applicable. He added “The battle forces require major effort, in addition he said that there are certain norms and traditions in our society, so what is good in the United States is no good for us.”

He added that it is impossible to have mixed genders at the military camps. In that context Dina commented that they don’t demand a mixed environment, but all they need is to allocate special camps, where they get trained and supervised by women in respect to our eastern traditions.

Hossam El-Sokkari, the program’s presenter and one of the judges in the MDI contest questioned Gehad on whether their families agree on their initiatives; she confirmed their agreement and encouragement by stating “from the religious perspective, women in the Prophet day (PBUH) were engaged in wars, and also women participated during World War II, so why we shall wait until a conflict occurs?”.

In another context, Hossam asked a question to General Hagag that circulates around the idea of recruiting women in many Arab countries such as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and even Iran. The General replied that they are considered revolutionary guards, while the military is something else, and there are no women in the world that command a military division. That reply was met by a response from Dina, saying that Joan of Arc was a French military leader and she proved to be loyal and successful.

The episode included the religious perspective concerning this issue, as Saad El-Deen Al Hilali, a professor in comparative jurisprudence, joined in via a telephone call. He said “The girls initiative is a big significance and proof on the nationalistic soul that is in the Egyptian heritage, that reflects the desire of women to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their country, however it is inappropriate to mix the military leadership with women’s volunteering now”. The girls responded to that reply by questioning “where is the confusion in devising one hour to discuss the issue?”.

In addition to the debate between the guests, the program received many phone calls giving more views from the Egyptian street and public opinion that mostly were opposed to the idea. At the same time, the girls kept defending their idea as they mentioned that reinforcing the idea that women are weak and incapable of resisting burdens is a wrong understanding, because Egyptian women work, raise their children, and practice difficult sports, while maintaining their other roles efficiently, so what is the problem in joining the military to serve their country like men?