

## Saudi scholars: Women can drive ... but

*by UPI*

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia - A number of Saudi religious scholars say the issue of women driving cars is a social, not a religious one. "In principle women driving is permitted in Islam," Sheik Abdul Mohsen Al-Obaikan, a member of the Council of Senior Islamic Scholars, told Arab News. Obaikan, citing a fatwa by the former Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdulaziz Bin-Baz, said women should be allowed to drive in rural areas. In the city, he said, men often behave badly, even when they see women in cars with drivers or male relatives, and traffic is also a problem. Sheik Mehsin Al-Awaji said driving is part of a "package" so Saudi Arabia would need more women working as police officers and mechanics. The Saudi Interior Ministry said no law actually bars women from driving. But women have occasionally been arrested after they were found behind the wheel.

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