



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

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EWIC Staff Report: **WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT: MUSLIM-MAJORITY COUNTRIES**

There are many examples of women in current leadership roles in Muslim-majority countries. The majority of Muslims inhabit countries that either presently have women serving as their elected representatives or have done so in recent history. Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh are considered to be the most populous Muslim countries in the world. Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh have all had women who served as presidents and Prime Ministers.

Megawati Sukarnoputri was Indonesia's second democratically elected president (2001-2004). Megawati Sukarnoputri was the fourth woman to serve as head of the Indonesian government. <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/resources>

Benazir Bhutto was the first female Prime Minister of Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto was also the leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Bhutto served as Prime Minister from 1988 to 1990 and then again from 1993-1996. Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in 2007. <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/resources>

Khaleda Zia has been involved in politics in Bangladesh for over 30 years. Khaleda Zia served as Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 1991-1995 and again from 2001-2006. <http://www.forbes.com/lists/2005/11/JSK7.html>

Sheikh Hasina has been the Prime Minister of Bangladesh since 2009. She previously held the same position from 1996-2001.

Tansu Penbe Ciller was the Prime Minister of Turkey from 1993-1996. <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/03/world/istanbul-journal-turks-espouse-change-she-has-a-smile-of-steel.html>

Atifete Jahjaga is the president of the Muslim-majority country of Kosovo. Atifete Jahjaga assumed office in April 2011. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/07/atifete-jahjaga-kosovo-president_n_846356.html

Roza Isakovna Otunbayeva was elected to serve as the interim president of the Muslim-majority country of Kyrgyzstan from 2010-2011. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8608708.stm>

Mame Madior Boye was the Prime Minister of Senegal from 2001 to 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1203435.stm>

Habiba Sarabi was appointed in 2005 to be governor of the Bamiyan Province in Afghanistan. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4610311.stm

Lateefa Al Gaood was elected to the Council of Representatives in Bahrain in 2006. <http://gulffnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-s-woman-candidate-gets-a-boost-after-two-opponents-quit-race-1.260845>

Mehreen Faruqi is the first Muslim to enter the Australian parliament. Mehreen Faruqi migrated from Pakistan with her family in the early 1990's. Faruqi will be the first female Muslim in Australia government. <http://www.voanews.com/content/first-muslim-woman-will-enter-australian-parliament/1647010.html>

According to an encyclopedia entry by Amaney Jamal the Arab countries of Morocco and Jordan have reserved parliamentary seats for women. Jamal's paper notes that despite the fact that women are underrepresented in governmental positions in the Arab world women's general employment in government offices has been increasing. http://www.princeton.edu/~ajamal/encyclopedia_entry_EWIC_Jamal.pdf

King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia recently issued a decree granting women the right to be members of the formerly all-male Shura Council. The king has appointed 30 women to fill the Shura positions. The council drafts laws which are brought before the King who has the ultimate power to decide which laws pass. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/01/11/259881.html>

PROPORTION OF SEATS HELD BY WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%) Women in parliaments are the percentage of parliamentary seats in a single or lower chamber held by women.

Data from the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS/countries/1W?display=default>

Afghanistan: 2011: 28%	Lebanon: 2011: 3%
Algeria: 2011: 8%	Libya: 2011: 8%
Azerbaijan: 2011: 16%	Malaysia: 2011: 10%
Bahrain: 2011: 3%	Pakistan: 2011: 22%
Bangladesh: 2011:13%	Sudan: 2011: 26%
Egypt: 2010: 2%	Syria: 2011: 12%
Eritrea: 2011: 22%	Tajikistan: 2011: 19%
India: 2011: 11%	Tunisia: 2010: 28%
Indonesia: 2011: 18%	Turkey: 2011: 14%
Iran: 2011: 3%	Turkmenistan: 2011: 17%
Jordan: 2011: 11%	United Arab Emirates: 2011: 23%
Kazakhstan: 2011: 18%	United Kingdom: 2011: 17%
Kuwait: 2011: 8%	Uzbekistan: 2011: 22%

As of 2011, Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, and the United Arab Emirates both have a higher proportion of female representation in their lower chambers than the US.

<http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=MDG&f=seriesRowID%3a557%3bcountryID%3a360%2c784%2c826%2c840%3byear%3a2011&c=2.3.4&s=countryEnglishName:asc,year:desc&v=1>

Egyptian women make up close to one-third of the Egyptian parliament. Egyptian women were given the right to vote in the same era that European women, which it should be noted was much earlier than Switzerland. Shaheen, Jack G. (2003). "Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People". *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (1): 171–193 [184]. doi:10.1177/0002716203588001011

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MUSLIM-MAJORITY COUNTRIES

1918 Azerbaijan Democratic Republic	1949-1953 Syria
1920 Albania	1952 Lebanon
1920 Albania	1956 Comoros, Egypt, Mali, Mauritania, Somalia
1921 Azerbaijan	1957 Malaysia
1924 Tajikistan & Kazakhstan	1959 Tunisia
1927 Turkmenistan	1960 Gambia
1930 Turkey	1961 Sierra Leone
1932 Maldives	1962 Algeria
1938 Uzbekistan	1963 Iran & Morocco
1945 Bosnia, Indonesia and Senegal	1964 Sudan
1946 British Palestine	1970 Yemen
1947-1956 Pakistan	1972 Bangladesh
1984 Niger	1974 Jordan

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/interactive/2011/jul/06/un-women-vote-timeline-interactive>