



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Women in Government: West Sub-Saharan Africa

Dr. Suad Joseph, General Editor

Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Women and Gender Studies, University of California, Davis

EWIC Staff: Datasheet

- ❖ The majority of the governments in Western Sub-Saharan Africa are unicameral; consisting of one legislative or parliamentary chamber. All governments in Western Sub-Saharan Africa have women in parliament.¹
- ❖ Burkina-Faso is a unicameral government. Women in Burkina-Faso hold 18.9% of seats in parliament. Burkina-Faso requires that each party reach or surpass a 30% quota for female candidates in the nomination process. Parties that fail to reach that number will lose public funding while parties who reach or exceed the quota are awarded additional government funding.²
- ❖ Gambia, like Burkina-Faso has unicameral parliament. Gambia does not hold a quota for female candidates. Gambian women comprise 9.43% of seats in the parliament.³
- ❖ The unicameral Mauritanian National Assembly reserves 20 seats for women after a nation-wide election. Despite the quota, 37 (25.2% of the seats) of the 147 seats are held by women.⁴
- ❖ In Chad, 14.9% of seats in the Lower or single House are held by women. Chad does not currently have a gender quota.⁵
- ❖ In Niger the Constitutional Court rejects candidate lists that do not include candidates of both sexes. According to Nigerien law, the proportion of elected candidates of either sex must not be less than 10%. Currently Nigerien women hold 15 of the 113 seats in the Assemblée National.⁶
- ❖ Senegal, a unicameral parliament, employs a zippered candidate list in elections; every other candidate is either male or female. Since 2010 Senegal has mandated gender parity on all candidate lists. Candidate lists which do not equally represent both men and women are not admitted. Sixty-four of the 150 parliamentary seats are held by women.⁷
- ❖ In Sierra Leone, 12.4% of seats in the Lower or single House are held by women.⁸ Five parties currently require that 30% of candidates be women and two parties have made a commitment to reach 50% gender parity. Women's groups are currently working for legislative quotas and a Constitutional review is underway. Fifteen out of the 121 parliamentary seats are held by women.⁹ Seats are held for women at the sub-national level.

¹ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/134322/constitutional-law/22080/Unicameral-and-bicameral-legislatures?anchor=ref384652>

² http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2047_A.htm <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=BF>

³ http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2117_A.htm

⁴ <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?country=151>

⁵ <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

⁶ <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=NE>

⁷ <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=SN>

⁸ <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2281.htm>

⁹ <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=SL>