



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Women in Government: Heads of State in the Muslim World

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- ❖ Benazir Bhutto was one of the youngest heads of state when she won the first free elections in Pakistan at the age of 35, and in 1988 became the first female Prime Minister of a majority Muslim country.
- ❖ Two years into her first term, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed Bhutto from her post on corruption charges. In 1993, she was reelected as Prime Minister. However, on December 27, 2007, she was assassinated by a suicide bomber following a campaign rally.¹
- ❖ For the last 24 years (1991-present), Bangladesh has been led by female Prime Ministers, the first being Khaleda Zia, who was succeeded by Skeikh Hasina.²
- ❖ Khaleda Zia became the first female Prime Minister of Bangladesh, serving her first term from 1991-1996, and then again from 2001-2006. She stepped down at the end of 2006, and in 2007, a state of emergency was declared, and an army-backed government took power. Zia was later arrested on charges of corruption.³
- ❖ In 1996, Skeikh Hasina became Prime Minister of Bangladesh when her party, the Awami League, won 146 Parliamentary seats. After corruption charges were waged against her, she was forced into temporary exile. She later returned, and led her party to second victory in 2008 when she regained the presidency.⁴
- ❖ After the resignation of President Bacharuddin Habibie, Megawati Sukarnoputri became the president of Indonesia from 2001-2004. She is the daughter of the country's first president, Achmad Sukarno, and was the first female president of Indonesia.⁵
- ❖ From 2007-2012, longtime Parliament member Pratibha Patil was elected the first female president of India.⁶ Although, during her time as president, she pardoned many people on death row, and used government money for personal expenses.⁷

¹ <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/bhu0bio-1>

² http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/list_of_prime_ministers_of_bangladesh

³ <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Khaleda-Zia>

⁴ http://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/muslimwomen/bio/sheikh_hasina_wazed/

⁵ <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100541365>

⁶ <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Pratibha-Patil>

⁷ <https://www.quora.com/Why-is-Pratibha-Patil-widely-hated-and-disrespected-despite-having-held-the-prestigious-office-of-the-President-of-India>