



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Women and the Arab Spring: Libya

Dr. Suad Joseph, General Editor

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

EWIC Staff: Datasheet

- ❖ On February 15th, 2011, the mothers, sisters, and widows of those tortured and massacred in 1996 at Abu Salim prison in Tripoli, Libya demonstrated in front of the Court of Justice and denounced the corruption of the Ghaddafi regime, a demonstration that sparked mass protests throughout the country.¹
- ❖ During the 8 month revolution to overthrow Ghaddafi in Libya in 2011, women played the role of spying on government troops, smuggling munitions past checkpoints, created makeshift hospitals, and in some cases, actively took up arms against government troops²
- ❖ As a result of the 2011 revolution in Libya, Voice of Libyan Women, an organization that advocates for increased political participation and economic empowerment of Libyan women, was founded.³
- ❖ In 2010, prior to the 2011 uprisings, women held 8% of seats in the Libyan government, compared to 17% after the revolution in 2012.⁴
- ❖ In July of 2011, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD) interviewed 50 Libyan women who sought temporary refuge in Tunisia, all of whom stated that it was not the war that caused them to flee, but rather the fear of being raped by Gadhafi's forces.⁵
- ❖ The National Transitional Council (NTC) was formed for ten months between 2011 and 2012 following the end of the Ghaddafi regime in order to act as an interim government and take over Libyan foreign relations.⁶ However, there were only 2 women on the 40 person council.⁷
- ❖ After the dissolving of the NTC in 2013, 29 women from across party lines in the Libyan congress came together to form a women's coalition, advocating for greater female participation in the drafting of the new constitution.⁸
- ❖ In 2014, the Libyan government issued a decree that declared rape during conflict a war crime, and set forth a plan to pay rape victims during the 2011 uprisings and under Ghaddafi's regime reparations.⁹
- ❖ According to the World Bank, as of 2015, women held 16% of seats in the Libyan government.¹⁰

¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201206/20120608ATT46510/20120608ATT46510EN.pdf>

² <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/women-the-libyan-rebellions-secret-weapon-124986532/?no-ist>

³ <http://www.vlwlibya.org/about-3/>

⁴ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>

⁵ <http://arabwomenspring.fidh.net/libya>

⁶ <http://ntclibya.org/>

⁷ <http://www.usip.org/publications/2011/11/02/women-and-the-arab-spring>

⁸ http://womeninwar.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Beirut/6/Asma%20Khalifa_Libyan%20Women%20in%20Conflict-UHGPW.pdf

⁹ <http://www.newsweek.com/libya-set-pay-reparations-victims-rape-war-crime-254717>

¹⁰ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>