



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

South Asian Muslim Women in Government

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EWIC Staff: Datasheet

- ❖ Abida Sultan, an Indian Muslim woman, was a UN delegate in 1954, an Ambassador to Brazil and Chile from 1954-1959 and remained an active politician throughout her life.¹
- ❖ Baroness Pola Uddin was the first Bangladeshi and the first Muslim woman to be elected into the House of Lords, the upper house of the UK Parliament.² She was elected on July 18th 1998.³
- ❖ Begum Khaleda Zia was the first woman Prime Minister of Bangladesh and former leader of the Bangladesh nationalist Awami Party. She served as PM from 1991-96 and from 2001-2006. Khaleda Zia instituted new programs for the education of girls. Gender parity was achieved in primary education during her term as Prime Minister.⁴
- ❖ Sheikhha Hasina Wajed, a leader of the Bangladesh Awami Party, was Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 1996-2001 and 2009-present. Her policies have focused on increasing the representation of women in government and preventing violence against women and children.⁵
- ❖ Benazir Bhutto was the Prime Minister of Pakistan from 1988-1990 and 1993-1996. At age 35, she was elected as the first woman to be Prime Minister of any Muslim country. She led the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), founded by her father. She became an internationally known figure for her policies and struggle with government corruption. Bhutto was assassinated in 2007.⁶
- ❖ Fawzia Koofi was elected in 2005 as the first female member of the Afghan Parliament. She has announced that she will run for President in 2014. Koofi has spoken out against the Taliban and corruption, and has lobbied for better treatment of Afghan women.⁷
- ❖ Shukria Barakzai has been member of Afghanistan's parliament from 2005-2013. She is editor-in-chief of Afghanistan's first women's magazine, Aina-E-Zan (Women's Mirror)⁸. In response to the Taliban, Barakzai created an underground school for girls in Kabul. In 2011 Barakzai announced she would be running for President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2014.⁹

¹ http://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/muslimwomen/bio/abida_sultan/

² <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/jun/17/religion.immigrationpolicy>

³ <http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/baroness-uddin/1827>

⁴ http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/Z_0016.htm

⁵ http://www.bangladesh.gov.bd/index.php?Itemid=142&id=76&option=com_content&task=view

⁶ <http://www.biography.com/people/benazir-bhutto-9211744?page=1>

⁷ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9098660/The-Taliban-want-to-kill-me.-But-I-am-fighting-for-my-daughters-freedom.html>

⁸ <http://www.worldpress.org/award2004.cfm#down>

⁹ <http://www.openthemagazine.com/article/international/the-woman-who-the-taliban-and-the-nato-fear>