



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Women in parliament in 2025

The year in review



Following the 2025 elections, the Plurinational State of Bolivia is now among the handful of countries that have gender parity or more women than men in parliament. © AP Photo/Juan Karita

Introduction

For some years now, the global progress on women's parliamentary representation has stagnated. In 2025 – a landmark year marking several milestones for gender equality – it continued its slow trend. Women comprised 27.2% of all MPs as of 1 January 2025. This share had inched up to only 27.5% by 1 January 2026 – an increase of only 0.3 percentage points – and varied from 27.4% in lower or single chambers to 27.8% in upper chambers.

In 2025, 49 countries held parliamentary polls for 62 chambers. Across these chambers, women comprised 29.5% of all MPs that were elected or appointed. This was a 0.6-percentage-point increase from the share of women elected or appointed in previous polls of these chambers.¹

¹ Comparison with previous results excludes two new chambers (upper chambers of Togo and Chad) that held parliamentary elections for the first time in 2025. Figures also exclude Venezuela, as official results of the 2025 elections were not yet available at the time of publication.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The share of women in national parliaments increased only by 0.3 percentage points, from 27.2% on 1 January 2025 to 27.5% on 1 January 2026. This was the same rate of progress as a year earlier.
- In the 49 countries that held parliamentary renewals for 62 chambers in 2025, women accounted for 29.5% of elected or appointed MPs – a 0.6-percentage-point improvement as compared to the previous polls in these same countries.¹
- The Americas remained the region with the highest representation of women, who accounted for 36.1% of members elected to 20 chambers in the 13 countries that held parliamentary renewals in 2025. Overall, as of 1 January 2026, women accounted for 35.6% of all parliamentarians in the region, across all chambers and countries.
- Kyrgyzstan recorded the highest progress in women's representation among countries that held elections in 2025, with a 12.9-percentage-point increase in its parliament. It was followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (+12.3 percentage points) and the upper chamber in Saint Lucia (+9.1 percentage points).
- Quotas continued to be a significant driver of women's representation in parliament in 2025. The 36 chambers that had some form of quotas elected or appointed 30.9% women on average, versus 23.3% in chambers with no quotas. The share of women elected was the highest (37.3%) in chambers that had both legislated and voluntary quotas.

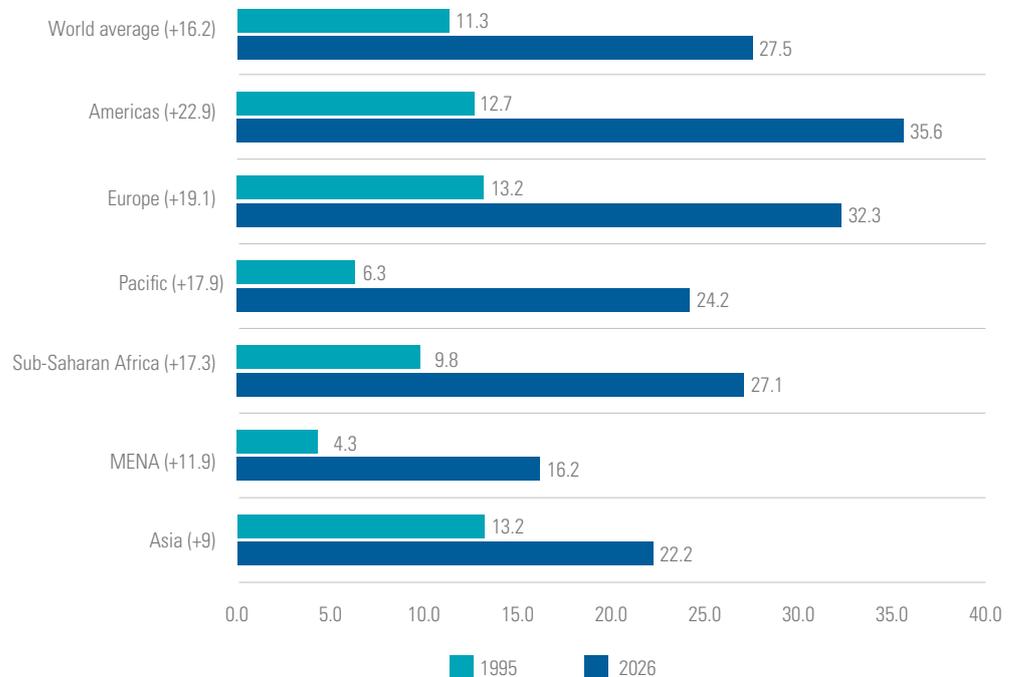
HIGHLIGHTS

- At the end of 2025, seven countries had parity (or a greater share of women than men) in the lower or single chambers of their parliaments. This was one more than at the beginning of the year. Rwanda continued to lead the world, with women accounting for 63.8% of parliamentary membership, followed by Cuba (57.2%), Nicaragua (55%), Bolivia (50.8%) and Mexico (50.4%), while both Andorra and the United Arab Emirates had parity.
- In 50 countries, women held between one third and half of seats in the lower or single chamber of parliament at the end of 2025, down from 51 countries at the beginning of 2025.
- At the end of 2025, women accounted for less than 10% of members of the lower or single chamber of parliament in 21 countries, the same percentage as a year earlier. This figure included three countries – Oman, Tuvalu and Yemen – with no women MPs in their lower or single chamber.

The most striking improvement in women’s parliamentary representation was recorded in the parliaments of Kyrgyzstan (+12.9 percentage points), followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (+12.3 percentage points) and the upper chamber in Saint Lucia (+9.1 percentage points).

Figure 1

World and regional averages of women in parliaments (%), 1995 and 2026



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) data for all houses combined, figures correct as of 1 July 1995 and 1 January 2026 respectively. The baseline year of 1995 corresponds to the time of adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

There were some notable developments in some regions around the world:

- The Americas region is home to four of the top five countries with the highest female parliamentary representation (Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Mexico, all having parity or more women than men in the lower or single chambers of their national parliaments).
- The Asia region recorded the highest improvement (+3.7 percentage points) among all regions in women’s parliamentary representation across the chambers that saw parliamentary renewals in 2025.
- Women comprised at least 30% of all MPs elected across the nine chambers that held parliamentary elections in Europe in 2025.



In 2025, the share of women MPs in Ecuador reached a record high of 45% thanks to a parity quota law that now also requires that women head half of political party lists. © Rodrigo BUENDIA/AFP

Regional trends

The Americas

For some years now, the Americas region has been the global leader in women's parliamentary participation, and 2025 was no different. Women comprise 35.6% of all MPs in the region (as of 1 January 2026), the highest across all regions. The region is also home to four of the top five countries with the highest female parliamentary representation (Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Mexico, all having parity or more women than men in the lower or single chambers of their national parliaments).

In 2025, 13 countries² in the region saw parliamentary renewals for 20 chambers. On average, 36.1% of those elected or appointed were women across them all, an increase of 0.7 percentage points as compared to the share of women in their preceding elections in these chambers. In 12 chambers, women's representation saw an improvement in this election cycle compared to the previous cycle, while in 4 chambers it declined. In the rest, it stayed either the same or recorded a less than one percentage-point change. Leading the progress was Saint Vincent and the Grenadines where, owing to a small parliament, women's representation saw a 12.3-percentage-point improvement (following the increase in their share of seats from 4 to 7), followed by the upper chambers of Saint Lucia and Chile, which saw a 9.1- and 8-percentage-point improvement respectively.

There were also some notable developments in the region with parliamentary elections leading to historic gender milestones at the executive level. For instance, in Suriname, Jennifer Geerlings-Simons became president after her party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), won the largest number of seats in parliamentary elections held in May. She became the first woman to reach the top political office in the country. In Trinidad and Tobago, Kamla Persad-Bissessar was elected as prime minister after her party, the United National Congress (UNC), won parliamentary polls held in April. This is Ms. Persad-Bissessar's second term in this position (after having previously served as prime minister during 2010–2015). With this development, Trinidad and Tobago became one of a handful of countries in the world where both the head of the state and head of government were women (Christine Kangaloo has been the country's president since March 2023). In Canada, Prime Minister Mark Carney appointed a [cabinet with gender parity](#) after returning the Liberal Party to power successfully following the elections. The previous prime minister, Justin Trudeau, had set the precedent of a parity cabinet, as well as appointed more women than ever before to sit in the Senate, which now has more women than men for the first time in the country's history.

² The total excludes Venezuela, as official results of the 2025 elections were not yet available at the time of publication.

Bolivia's election brings back a parliament with parity and Ecuador sees highest share of women elected

Bolivia is now among the handful of countries that have parity (or more women than men) in their parliament. Sixty-six women were elected to the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of its parliament, in 2025, together comprising 50.8% of all MPs. The upper house, the Chamber of Senators, is now a female-majority chamber, with 58.3% of all members being women. Women's representation improved in both chambers in 2025 – with the lower chamber recording a 4.6-percentage-point improvement and the upper chamber seeing women's representation inch up further by 2.8 percentage points compared to the previous polls. Bolivia has made remarkable progress on women's parliamentary representation in recent decades thanks to a gender parity quota adopted in 2010. By 2014, it had elected a parliament with 53.1% female MPs in the lower chamber, becoming one of the global leaders on this metric. In the 2020 elections, however, the share dropped to 46.9%, and in 2025 there is parity again. Nearly half of the women who were elected are 40 years or younger, indicating a polity open to youth. However, in a major gap, among special indigenous seats, only one of the seven seats (14.2%) was won by a woman, indicating the need for special attention to ensure that women across all groups and communities are getting an equal chance at political participation and representation.

Women's representation in **Ecuador's** National Assembly reached 45% after the 2025 election, an all-time high, and a two-percentage-point increase from 2023 when the previous polls were held. The country has had a gender parity and alternation requirement since 2008. Further, there is also a law mandating that 25% of candidates in binomial and pluripersonal elections (elections for positions involving multiple candidates) must be young persons (18 to 29 years of age). In 2020, it also introduced a closed list system and a law that requires parties to progressively increase the share of women at the top of their lists. [In 2021, the requirement was 15%. This was increased to 30% for the elections held in 2023](#) and in 2025 parties were required to ensure [parity among candidates heading party lists](#).

Mid-term elections in Argentina and early elections in Canada see fewer women getting elected

Mid-term elections in **Argentina** saw 127 of the 257 seats renewed. The total number of women in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower chamber, stands at 106 after the election. Their overall share – 41.2% – is a 1.9-percentage-point decrease as compared to 2023. Even though the electoral law requires parity among candidates, including a zipper system mandating that women and men be placed as alternating candidates on party lists, there was no parity when it came to lists headed by men and women. Women headed [only about 30% of all party lists](#) and, in several provinces, the share of female-led lists remained below 15%, even though some provinces had parity when it came to who was heading lists. In the Senate, the upper chamber, 11 women were elected across the 24 seats up for renewal

in 2025. After the election, women's representation in the Senate across all 72 seats stood at 45.8%, the same share as at the end of the preceding election.

In 2021, **Canada** had elected the [highest share of women](#) MPs in its history. But that progress seems to have stalled this year. The share of women elected to the House of Commons, the lower chamber of parliament, remained largely unchanged (with a small dip) in 2025 (30.3%) as compared to the previous election of 2021 (30.5%).

In a context of [growing violence against women MPs](#), fewer women contested this year's election – while the share of women among candidates had been 37.9% previously, in 2025 this fell to 30.4%. [Three of the four major political parties saw the share of female candidates shrink](#), according to an analysis by Equal Voice, a charity working to improve women's representation in Canadian politics. Women made up 35% of [Liberal Party candidates in 2025 \(compared to 43% in 2021\)](#), 22% of [Conservative Party candidates \(previously this share was 33%\)](#) and 39% for the [Bloc Québécois \(the corresponding share in 2021 was 47%\)](#).

Europe

Women's parliamentary representation in Europe stood at 32.3% (as of 1 January 2026), the second-highest share across all regions. Nine chambers from the region held parliamentary elections in 2025 across as many countries. The share of women elected across them all was 35.4%, only a tiny improvement of 0.2 percentage points as compared to the combined share of women MPs elected in the respective previous elections of these chambers. In five chambers, women's parliamentary representation saw an improvement in 2025, in three chambers there was a decline and in one chamber there was a less than one percentage-point difference. Czechia led the progress in the region, registering an 8.5-percentage-point uptick in the share of female MPs in its lower chamber, followed by Ireland's upper chamber (+5 percentage points) and Liechtenstein (+4 percentage points). Additionally, in Liechtenstein, [Brigitte Haas was elected the country's prime minister](#) after her party, the Fatherland Union, won parliamentary polls in February. She became the first woman in the country's history to get elected to this office.

Women's representation reaches an all-time high in lower chambers in Czechia and the Netherlands, and in Ireland's Senate

Elections held in October led to a significant improvement in women's parliamentary representation in the lower chamber in **Czechia** – 67 women were elected among the 200 MPs, together comprising a third of parliamentarians. This was a striking jump from the share of women elected in the previous polls of 2021, when 50 women accounting for 25% of all MPs had been elected, and [a historic high for the country](#). The election was also notable for youth representation, as [15 MPs aged 30 years or under](#) were elected, a four-fold increase from the previous polls. They



The election of women to Czechia's lower chamber reached a historic high in 2025. One third of MPs are now women and Julie Smejkalová (pictured), aged 21, became the youngest-ever MP in the country's history. © Renata Matějková/List of News

included [Julie Smejkalová](#), who at 21 (the legal minimum age to be elected) became the youngest-ever MP in the country's history. Overall, the average MP elected in 2025 was aged 49.1 years, lower than in 2021 when the average age of elected MPs was 50.4 years.

The share of elected women [was notably higher among certain political parties](#), sometimes even higher than [the share of female candidates put forward by the party](#) – for instance, 15 of the 18 elected MPs of the Pirate Party are women (even though women comprised 38% of candidates), and 13 of the 22 elected MPs of the “Mayors and Independents” party (STAN) are women (among candidates, women comprised 31%). In the ANO (“Yes”) party, the largest party with 80 elected MPs, the share of women is 26.3% (women made up 28% of candidates). Strikingly, this was the first time that the share of women elected exceeded their share on candidate lists, [thanks to preferential voting for women](#).

The country's voting system requires voters to indicate their preference for political parties, and also for individual candidates, by circling their names on party lists (the process is therefore nicknamed *kroužkování* (circling)). When individual candidates receive substantial votes, they can move up on party lists, improving their chances of getting elected as representatives. In 2021, when the previous round of parliamentary elections took place in the country, a new initiative called *zakroužkuj ženu* (which translates as “circle a woman”), had [asked voters to circle](#) the names of women candidates on election day to send out a signal to parties that they wanted more women elected. Thirteen women were estimated to have been elected thanks to voters circling their names, the initiative [estimates](#). In 2025 – even as the share of women among candidates remained nearly the same as the previous election – voters indicating their choice seems to have boosted women's representation further, electing [23 women as MPs](#).

Twenty women were elected as senators to the *Seanad Éireann*, the Parliament of **Ireland's** upper chamber – together they comprised 40.8% of all MPs who were elected in this cycle. An additional seven women were nominated, and the total share of women senators stands at 45% after the election, an increase of 5 percentage points as compared to the previous election of 2020 and [a record high for the country](#). In 2020, 15 women had been elected and 9 nominated.

The **Netherlands'** new lower chamber elected in 2025 comprises 43.3% women – an improvement from the previous election when the share of women among elected MPs was 40%. This is the [highest parliamentary representation](#) for women in the country's history. The new parliament also saw [the median age of lawmakers](#) drop marginally from 45.2 to 43.8 years. The Netherlands uses a [proportional representation system](#) and voters can also indicate preferences [for individual candidates on the list](#). If and when candidates who are placed lower on the lists receive over 25% of preferential votes, they move up and win the seat. Five women ended up winning their seats due to such preferential voting by voters, [according to *Stem op een Vrouw* \(Vote for a Woman\)](#), a foundation that advocates for women's participation in politics, helping strengthen women's representation in parliament.

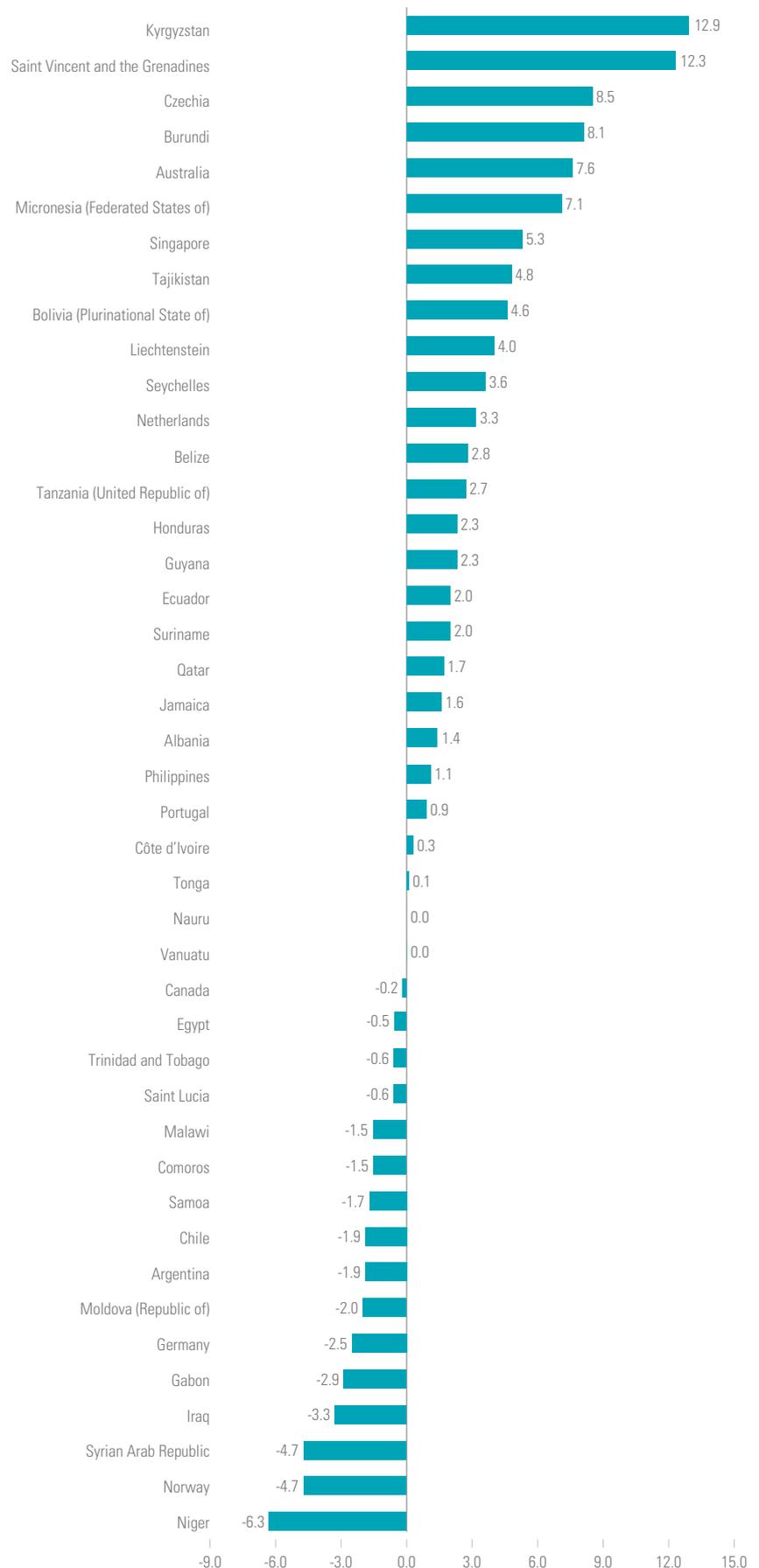
In Germany, change in the electoral system leads to a decrease in women's representation

In **Germany**, 204 women were elected to the *Bundestag*, the lower chamber, accounting for 32.4% of all MPs. This was a decrease of 2.5 percentage points as compared to the previous election, when the share of women among elected MPs had been 34.9%. The decrease has been attributed to changes in the electoral system – Germany uses a mixed electoral system where voters cast two votes – one for a candidate who is elected by a simple majority and the other for political parties who end up getting represented proportionally to the vote share received. In 2025, [there was an amendment made to this system](#) – while the mixed system continued, the number of seats allocated to parties via proportional representation ended up being reduced (the 2025 election led to the election of 630 MPs compared to 736 previously). Since proportional representation systems tend to enable greater representation of women, experts had [foreseen a drop in the share of women elected](#) even before the elections took place.

Figure 2

Parliamentary renewals in 2025

Progress and setbacks (in percentage points) of women in lower or single houses of parliament renewed in 2025



Sub-Saharan Africa

At 27.1% (as of 1 January 2026), women's representation in the Sub-Saharan African region was just below the global average. In 2025, parliamentary renewals took place for 13 chambers in 11 countries in the region, resulting in 26.5% of seats held by women elected or appointed across them all. Two of these chambers – the upper chambers of Chad and Togo – were new and held parliamentary elections for the first time in 2025. Excluding them, 26.1% of MPs elected or appointed in the other 11 chambers were women in 2025, a marginal decline from the share of women elected or appointed previously in the same chambers (26.3%). In six chambers, the share of women MPs went up, while in four it saw a decline, and saw a less than one percentage-point change in one chamber.

Burundi records the largest gains in the region

In 2025, women's representation recorded gains in both chambers in **Burundi**. In the lower chamber, the National Assembly, women's representation recorded a 1.4-percentage-point improvement in 2025 after 44 women were elected or nominated, accounting for 39.6% of the 111 MPs. In the Senate, despite a smaller number of seats – constitutional amendments in 2023 had reduced the number of seats from 39 previously to 13 – the improvement was more striking: women won 5 out of the 10 indirectly elected seats, and 1 out of 3 appointed seats. As a result, the share of women elected or appointed was 46.2%, a 5.1-percentage-point jump from the previous legislature.

Burundi's electoral system uses quotas to ensure a minimum representation of women and different ethnic groups. [Some 30% of seats are reserved for women in both chambers.](#)

In Namibia's upper chamber, some progress after a period of setbacks, and an upper chamber for the first time in Chad

[Seven women were elected to the National Council in Namibia, the parliament's upper chamber.](#) Together they comprise 16.7% of total MPs (42) in that chamber. As compared to the previous polls of 2020, this was an increase of one woman among the MPs of the chamber. As a result of the 2004 and 2010 elections, the share of seats held by women was 26.9%. It declined thereafter – first to 24.4% in 2015, then to 14.3% in 2020. While the 2025 election slightly reverses this declining trend, the chamber continues to trail behind its own performance on this front. This trend could be attributed to the changes in the fortunes of the dominant South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) party in regional and local polls, which in turn have a bearing on the National Council, which is elected via an indirect vote. For years, SWAPO was the only party [voluntarily adopting a quota and the zipper system](#) to ensure parity among its candidates. [SWAPO had been the dominant party until 2015 but its share in regional councils dropped in 2020, and then saw an improvement in 2025.](#)

In a noteworthy development, Ms. Emma Muteka, the youngest regional councillor in Namibia, became the Deputy Speaker of the National Council after her re-election in 2025.



In 2025, women's representation saw noticeable gains in Burundi's parliament, reaching 39.6% in the lower chamber and 46.2% in the upper chamber. This is well beyond the 30% quota that applies to both chambers. © Tchandrou Nitanga/AFP

At the beginning of 2025, **Chad's** parliament had an upper chamber – the Senate. The chamber was established following [the constitutional reforms of 2020 and the new Constitution of 2023 that introduced significant changes](#) to the Central African nation's polity. The Senate has 69 members, 46 of whom are elected indirectly and the other 23 appointed by the President. There is [a quota to ensure at least 30% women's representation](#). In an election held in February, 18 women were among the 46 indirectly elected members of the Senate. Another eight were appointed, and their total share in the chamber after the election stood at 37.7%.

Women's representation declines in lower or single chambers of post-coup Gabon and Niger

In **Gabon**, 2025 marked an important year – parliamentary elections held that year were the first to be held since a 2023 coup d'état. Based on the Transitional Charter, published in September 2023, a coup leader, General Brice Oligui Nguema, was sworn in as the transitional president. A bicameral transitional parliament held its first session in October 2023. In November 2024, a new constitution was approved by referendum. The new constitution retained the bicameral parliament, both chambers having a five-year term. The electoral law adopted by the transitional parliament in January 2025 mandated that women comprise at least 30% of candidates for the National Assembly and Senate elections, and that at least 20% of candidates for these institutions must be young people.

Thirty women were elected among the 139 MPs for the National Assembly, the lower chamber, comprising 21.6% of the legislature, a 2.9-percentage-point decrease as compared to the previous share of women prior to the coup. In the Senate, 17 women were elected, comprising 24.3% of MPs, 1.4 percentage points higher than the previous share.

Similar to Gabon, **Niger** too witnessed a coup in July 2023 and parliament was dissolved. As a transition period is under way, the Charter of the Refoundation (a transitional charter) paved the way for the establishment of the Advisory Council for the Refoundation. On 1 May 2025, transitional president Tchiani signed a decree nominating 194 members for the Advisory Council, including 38 women (19.6%). Women's representation in the parliament after the last election prior to the coup had been 25.9%.

Middle East and North Africa

With only 16.2% of MPs being women as at 1 January 2026, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region trails behind other regions of the world when it comes to women's parliamentary representation. In 2025, parliamentary renewals were held for six chambers in five countries of the region, and the share of women among the MPs who were elected or appointed was only 18.5%, a small decline as compared to the previous share of 19.6% post the preceding renewals of these chambers. In five chambers, the share of women MPs decreased, while only one – Qatar's parliament – recorded an improvement of 1.7 percentage points.

Fewer women enter Iraq's parliament and Algeria's upper chamber

In **Iraq**, 84 women were elected in parliamentary elections held in November, comprising just over a quarter (25.5%) of all MPs. This was a decline from the previous election when 95 women had made it to parliament as MPs (and 3.3 percentage points lower). This is despite the fact that women comprised 29% of all candidates who contested the election, similar to their share among candidates in the previous election of 2021. Iraq's parliament reserves 25% of seats (83 of the 329) for women. Women can contest elections independently even without the quota, and the quota provisions are used if their share falls below the requirement of the mandate. In 2025, [fewer women – only 25 – were able to win independently as compared to the previous election when 57 women had been elected without the quota](#).

In the run-up to the elections, Iraq saw the launch of [a new political party](#) – the *al-Mawadda* women's party, a party aiming to become a distinctive and influential voice for women in Iraq's male-dominated and conservative political arena. However, the party was unable to take part in the elections held in 2025 due to procedural delays in its official establishment.

Women have always remained a very small minority (with their share in single digits) in **Algeria's** indirectly elected upper chamber, the *Majlis al-Ummah* or Council of the Nation, throughout much of its existence since 1997. Not much changed on that front in 2025 when 58 seats for the chamber were up for election. No woman was elected in these indirect elections. The chamber also includes members appointed by the President, and one woman became an MP via that route. The Council now has four women, together comprising only 2.5% of all MPs, even lower than their share after the previous poll (4.3%), the third-lowest share of women in upper chambers anywhere in the world.



In 2025, Egypt's lower chamber saw an improvement in women's representation, going beyond the 25% quota to reach 26.8% of seats.
© Islam Safwat/NurPhoto/NurPhoto via AFP

In Egypt, women's representation declines in both chambers

Egypt, too, saw a decline in women's representation in both chambers of its parliament. In the upper chamber, where members are elected via a mixed system, with 100 directly elected through closed party lists, 100 through a majority vote and another 100 appointed by the President, twenty women were elected along with 180 men. Another 12 women were appointed and the total share of women MPs in the chamber stands at 10.7% after the 2025 election, 2.7 percentage points lower than their share after the previous election. Their share only marginally exceeds the share of seats reserved for women by electoral law (10%). In the lower chamber too, the share of female MPs recorded a small decline. After the previous election, women had comprised 27.3% of all MPs, but in 2025, this fell to 26.8%. While Egypt had tried different forms of quotas previously, in 2020 a gender quota of 25% came into effect, significantly boosting women's parliamentary representation (by +11.3 percentage points). The 2025 elections were the second to be held since the quota came into effect, with women's representation remaining above the quota threshold despite a slight decline.

Qatar reverts to appointing its MPs

After holding its first national legislative election in 2021, in 2025 **Qatar** returned to a system where parliamentarians were only appointed, not elected. In 2024, the country [held a referendum](#) that paved the way for this shift. Under the new system, the Shura Council, Qatar's parliament, would comprise a minimum of 45 members appointed by the Emir. Three women were appointed, together accounting for 6.1% of all MPs. In 2021, no women had been elected and two had been appointed (making up 4.4% of seats). Women were appointed for the first time to the Shura Council in November 2017, reaching a record high of 9.8%. Currently, a woman occupies the position of Deputy Speaker, Dr. Hamda Al-Sulaiti, who also serves as one of the vice-presidents of the IPU Executive Committee.

Women in parliament

As at 1 January 2026

Proportion of women in parliament

27.5%

Globally, 27.5% of members of parliament are women (as at 1 January 2026)



Progress in 2025

Progress from 1 January 2025 to 1 January 2026

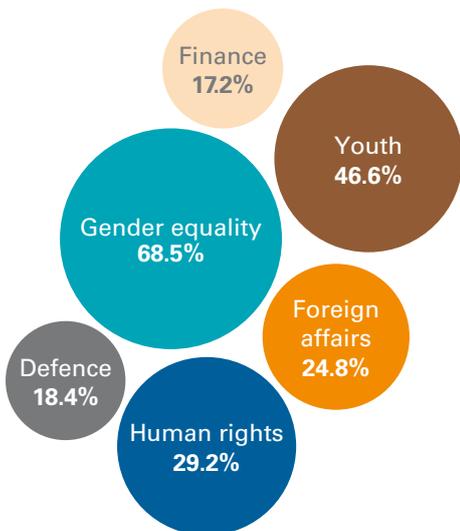
+0.3 points

Progress in recent years

(in percentage points, as at 1 January of each year)



Share of women chairs of standing parliamentary committees (%)



Women leaders of parliament

As at 1 January 2026, 54 parliamentary chambers are led by women

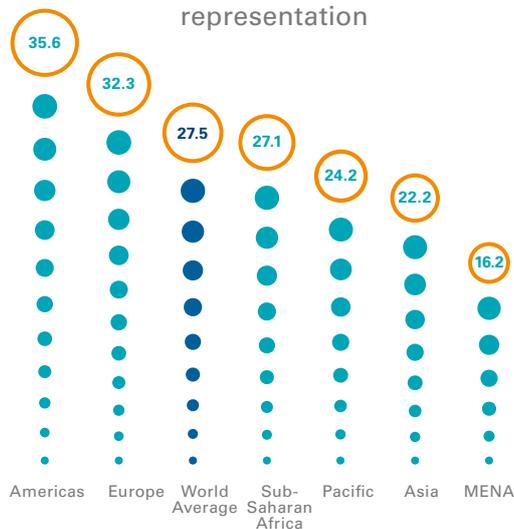


19.9%

of presiding officers of parliamentary chambers are women

Share of women MPs (%) by region

The Americas region leads the world on women's parliamentary representation



Women leaders of parliament appointed in 2025

12

The number of women among the 75 Speakers appointed in 2025 (16%)



These include two notable firsts: **Seychelles'** and **Namibia's** National Assemblies appointed women Speakers for the first time

Top 10

Countries with the highest share of women MPs in their lower/single chamber as at 1 January 2026

Rank	Country	Women MPs (%)
1	Rwanda	63.8
2	Cuba	57.2
3	Nicaragua	55.0
4	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	50.8
5	Mexico	50.4
6	Andorra	50.0
"	United Arab Emirates	50.0
8	Costa Rica	49.1
9	Australia	46.0
"	Iceland	46.0

Top 5 parliaments in 2025 elections/renewals

Lower/single chambers that recorded the most progress in 2025 (in percentage points)

Kyrgyzstan +12.9

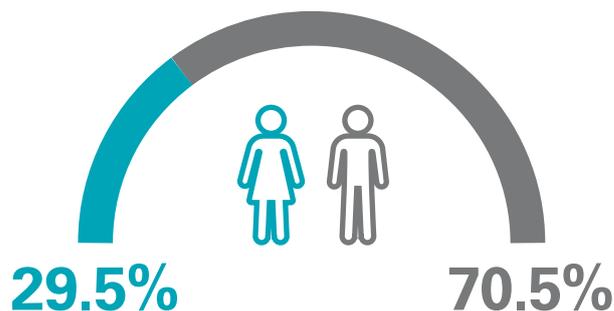
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines +12.3

Czechia +8.5

Burundi +8.1

Australia +7.6

Proportion of women elected/appointed in 2025



Proportion of women MPs in the 62 chambers renewed in 2025

Quotas work

In chambers where **no quota** was applied in renewals held in 2025:

23.3%

of those elected or appointed to parliament were women

In chambers where **some form of quota** was applied in renewals held in 2025:

30.9%

of those elected or appointed to parliament were women

Impact of electoral system on women's election in 2025



31.1% of those elected in **proportional representation or mixed electoral systems** were women

25.5% of those elected in **majoritarian or plurality electoral systems** were women

Elections in 2025: Highs and lows

62 chambers of parliament in 49 countries were renewed or had elections in 2025. These include 2 new chambers.

32/60  

have **more** women members than before 2025 elections/renewals

11/60  

have **a similar share*** of women members to before 2025 elections/renewals

17/60  

have **fewer** women members than before 2025 elections/renewals

*A similar share implies a change of less than one percentage point between elections/renewals.

Table 1

Women in lower and single chambers after parliamentary renewals in 2025

No.	Country	Total seats	Total women	% women	Quota
1	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	130	66	50.8	Yes***
2	Australia	150	69	46.0	Yes*
3	Ecuador	151	68	45.0	Yes***
4	Netherlands	150	65	43.3	Yes*
5	Argentina	257	106	41.2	Yes**
6	Norway	169	68	40.2	Yes*
7	Burundi	111	44	39.6	Yes**
8	Tanzania (United Republic of)	387	153	39.5	Yes***
9	Moldova (Republic of)	101	38	37.6	Yes**
10	Guyana	72	26	36.1	Yes***
11	Albania	140	49	35.0	Yes**
12	Chile	155	52	33.5	Yes*
13	Czechia	200	67	33.5	Yes*
14	Portugal	230	77	33.5	Yes**
15	Kyrgyzstan	87	29	33.3	Yes***
16	Germany	630	204	32.4	Yes*
17	Singapore	99	32	32.3	No
18	Liechtenstein	25	8	32.0	No
19	Suriname	51	16	31.4	No
20	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	23	7	30.4	No
21	Canada	343	104	30.3	Yes*
22	Jamaica	63	19	30.2	No
23	Honduras	128	38	29.7	Yes***
24	Tajikistan	63	18	28.6	No
25	Philippines	313	89	28.4	Yes*
26	Egypt	596	160	26.8	Yes**
27	Seychelles	34	9	26.5	No
28	Iraq	329	84	25.5	Yes**
29	Trinidad and Tobago	42	10	23.8	No
30	Gabon	139	30	21.6	Yes***
31	Malawi	224	48	21.4	Yes*
32	Micronesia (Federated States of)	14	3	21.4	No
33	Niger	194	38	19.6	No
34	Comoros	33	5	15.2	No
35	Côte d'Ivoire	253	34	13.4	Yes**
36	Belize	32	4	12.5	No
37	Nauru	19	2	10.5	No
38	Saint Lucia	19	2	10.5	No
39	Samoa	51	5	9.8	Yes**
40	Qatar	49	3	6.1	No
41	Syrian Arab Republic	122	6	4.9	No
42	Tonga	26	1	3.8	No
43	Vanuatu	52	1	1.9	No

Note: * indicates one or more political parties adopted a voluntary measure to increase the number of women candidates, ** indicates a legislated quota (either candidate quota or reserved seats), and *** indicates both legislated and voluntary party quotas

Asia

With women accounting for 22.2% of all MPs as at 1 January 2026, the Asia region trails behind all regions but one (MENA) when it comes to women's parliamentary representation. In 2025, five nations saw parliamentary renewals to seven chambers, with women comprising 29.5% of all MPs who were elected or appointed, an improvement of 3.7 percentage points as compared to the share of women after the respective previous renewals of these chambers. Barring one chamber (the upper chamber in the Philippines) where it decreased, all other chambers saw women's representation improve in 2025. The progress was led by Kyrgyzstan (+12.9 percentage points) followed by the upper chamber in Tajikistan and Singapore's parliament (+ 7.7 and +5.3 percentage points respectively). In a notable development in the region, in Japan, Sanae Takaichi became the country's prime minister, becoming the first-ever woman in the nation's history to rise to the top of the political ladder.

In Kyrgyzstan, a new voting system and stronger quota boost women's parliamentary representation

Kyrgyzstan went to the polls in 2025 with a new voting system and an increase in the gender quota mandate. Under the previous system, 54 of the 90 MPs were elected via party lists and the remaining 36 via single-mandate districts. There was a 30% quota for women for the seats that were elected via the proportional representation system, but no quota for the single-mandate districts. [As a consequence, while the share of female candidates among the proportional representation seats was 36% in the previous polls, it fell to a mere 6.5% among candidates for the single-mandate districts.](#)

In 2025, the country moved to a majoritarian system where voters would elect three representatives each from 30 districts using a simple majority voting system. [The new electoral law now requires that candidates from one gender cannot be granted more than two seats in a constituency during these elections.](#) In effect, it guarantees a minimum 33.3% representation of women among MPs. These changes seem to have had a direct impact on women's representation – 29 women were elected in 2025, a clear jump of 12.9 percentage points from the previous election (when the share of seats held by women post elections was 20.5%).

A milestone year for gender equality in Japan and progress made in Singapore and Tajikistan

The year 2025 was a landmark for **Japan's** political history – for the first time, the country has a woman prime minister. Japan's parliament voted and selected Sanae Takaichi to lead the country, breaking through a long-held glass ceiling in the nation's politics. Ms. Takaichi's election was preceded by another moment of progress – one third of the new MPs elected in a July election to the *Sangiin* (House of Councillors), the upper chamber of the East Asian nation's parliament, were women.

Forty-two women (including one who won a by-election) were elected to the chamber along with 83 men, marking a major step forward for women's participation in the country's politics. With this, women's overall representation in the chamber stands at 29.4%, up 3.6 percentage points as compared to post the last elections. The improvement occurred despite a drop in the share of women among candidates (29.1% this time compared to 33.2% in the last election, and below the government's own target of 35%).



In Kyrgyzstan, women's parliamentary representation reached a record high in 2025 thanks to a new voting system and a stronger gender quota, which now reserves one third of seats for women. © Vyacheslav Oseledko/AFP

[However, notably, conservative parties seem to have put forward more women this time, unlike in the past, helping to drive the improvement.](#)

[By the end of the same year, 58 female MPs from the lower chamber were demanding adapted facilities for women in the parliament building.](#) The basic demand for adequate infrastructure highlights that change is slowly but surely under way.

Thirty-two women were elected to **Singapore's** 99-member parliament in elections held in May 2025, comprising 32.3% of the MPs who were elected, an improvement of 2.5 percentage points as compared to the preceding elections of 2020. This was also an election that had seen an increase in the number and share of women who contested the polls, despite the absence of legislation requiring a minimum share of women candidates – 53 women contested the election in 2025,

comprising a quarter of all candidates, an improvement from the previous election when their combined share was 20.8%. The ruling People's Action Party (PAP), which won the election with a clear majority, put forward 32 women among its 97 candidates, [the most in its history](#). It gave tickets to 32 new candidates, 13 of which were women. The main opposition Workers' Party had [6 women among its 26 candidates](#).

Eighteen women were elected to the House of Representatives (lower chamber) in **Tajikistan**, comprising 28.6% of the 63 MPs. In the upper chamber, 6 women were elected along with 19 men; another 4 women and 4 men were appointed, leading to women filling 30.3% of seats. Women's representation improved in both chambers this year, recording a 4.8-percentage-point improvement in the lower chamber and a 7.7-percentage-point jump in the upper chamber.

Table 2

Women in upper houses after parliamentary renewals in 2025

No.	Country	Total seats	Total women	% women	Quota
1	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	36	21	58.3	Yes***
2	Australia	76	43	56.6	Yes*
3	Saint Lucia	11	6	54.5	No
4	Burundi	13	6	46.2	Yes**
5	Argentina	72	33	45.8	Yes**
6	Ireland	60	27	45.0	No
7	Chad	69	26	37.7	Yes**
8	Belize	14	5	35.7	No
9	Jamaica	21	7	33.3	No
10	Chile	50	16	32.0	Yes*
11	Tajikistan	33	10	30.3	No
12	Japan	248	73	29.4	No
13	Trinidad and Tobago	31	8	25.8	No
14	Togo	61	15	24.6	No
15	Gabon	70	17	24.3	Yes***
16	Philippines	24	5	20.8	Yes*
17	Namibia	42	7	16.7	Yes*
18	Egypt	300	32	10.7	Yes**
19	Algeria	163	4	2.5	Yes**

Note: * indicates one or more political parties adopted a voluntary measure to increase the number of women candidates, ** indicates a legislated quota (either candidate quota or reserved seats), and *** indicates both legislated and voluntary party quotas



Australia elected its highest-ever share of women MPs in 2025, reaching 46%. © Hilary Wardhaugh/Getty Images

Pacific

With 24.2% of seats held by women as at 1 January 2026, the Pacific region has the fourth-highest share of women parliamentarians in the world. However, the average masks wide intra-regional disparity. While the average share of women MPs in the Australia and New Zealand subregion is 48.1%, and the highest among all subregions of the world, in the Pacific Islands, this share is only 7.6% and the lowest across all subregions globally.

In 2025, elections were held to seven chambers across six nations in the region. On average, the share of women MPs elected or appointed was 32% across them all, a 3.5-percentage-point improvement as compared to the average share of women MPs after the respective previous elections in these chambers. Australia's lower chamber (+7.6-percentage points) and the Federated States of Micronesia (+7.1 percentage points) led the progress in the region.

Australia records impressive progress

In 2025, **Australia** made some substantial progress on women's parliamentary representation. With 69 women elected among its new batch of 150 MPs, the country elected its highest-ever share of women (46%). This was a 7.6 percentage-point improvement as compared to the previous election, when women comprised 38.4% of all MPs elected. As a consequence, Australia was ranked ninth in the world on the IPU's monthly ranking of women in parliaments (as of 1 January 2026), up from 33rd at the beginning of the year. The gains were largely driven by the [Labour Party](#), which

has [internal quotas](#) aiming for parity and which ended up winning the election decisively. More than half (56%) of the elected MPs from the party were women. The elected MPs include [Ali France](#), the first woman with a disability to win a seat in the Australian House of Representatives, and the first candidate to defeat an opposition leader in their own district. Another first was achieved by [Charlotte Walker](#) who, at 21 years old, became the [youngest-ever woman MP](#). The election also saw an increase in the representation of [MPs with multicultural backgrounds](#). Later, the Prime Minister appointed a cabinet that included 12 women along with 11 men, another [representation milestone](#) for the country.

Recent gains solidify in the Federated States of Micronesia

It was only in November 2021 when a woman became an MP for the first time in the history of the **Federated States of Micronesia**. Perpetua Sappa Konman became the Pacific nation's first-ever female member of Congress after winning a by-election to fill the seat of her late husband. Two years later, in 2023, there were two women MPs and, in 2025, this number further increased to three. Since it is a small parliament, women's overall share stands at 21.4%, much ahead of the Pacific Islands' subregion average share of 7.6%.

Quotas and electoral systems

Women are more likely to get elected in electoral systems that use proportional representation (PR) as compared to those only with a simple majority or plurality vote, IPU data and academic research have shown time and again. In 2025, chambers that deployed PR and mixed electoral systems elected 31.1% women, compared to only 25.5% in those where MPs were elected via a plurality or majority voting system. In chambers where MPs were appointed, the women’s share stood at 30.1% in 2025.

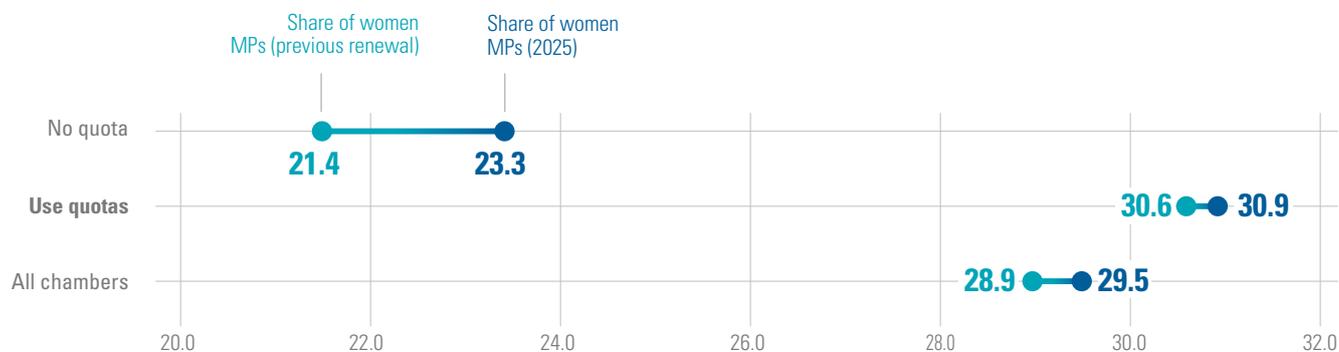
An even more key driver of women’s representation is the use of well-designed and ambitious gender quotas. In multiple previous analyses, the IPU has found that parliaments and chambers that deploy some form of quotas elected a higher share of women. In 2025 too, this pattern held true. Chambers with quotas ended up with 30.9% female MPs, while those without had only 23.3%. These trends were reflected in different ways in 2025 elections. For instance, Germany, which uses a mixed electoral system, incorporating both PR and majority systems, made some changes in 2025 that led to the number of seats with PR being reduced. The share of

women MPs saw a 2.5-percentage-point drop as compared to the previous poll despite existing voluntary party quotas. Kyrgyzstan, too, moved to a newer electoral system, shifting from a mixed to a majority system. However, it was accompanied by the implementation of one-third reserved seats for women applying to all seats, enabling a striking improvement in women’s representation in the parliament. Previously, under the mixed system, a 30% quota applied only to the seats to be filled via PR. While Ecuador has had a quota requiring parity for a while now, in recent years, it gradually increased the quota requirement for women heading electoral lists. In 2021, the requirement was 15%; it was increased to 30% in 2023 and to parity in 2025. It had a direct impact on women’s representation, which has increased from 38% (2021) to 43.1% (2023) and to 45% in 2025, the highest ever for the country.

In another positive development, although Montenegro did not hold elections in 2025, in July of that year its parliament increased the electoral quota for women on candidate lists from 30% previously to 40% for elections going forward. The law also includes an additional [rank-order requirement](#) that one in every three candidates on party lists be women and [sanctions for non-compliance with these requirements](#).

Figure 3

Share of women in parliaments (%), by chambers and use of quotas





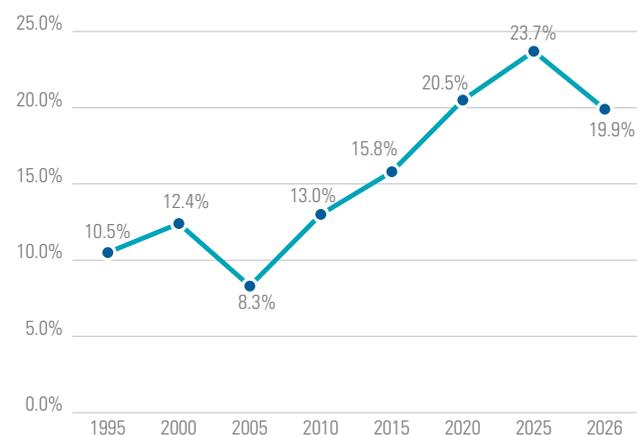
In Namibia, a milestone was achieved in 2025 as former prime minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila became the first woman Speaker of the National Assembly. © IPU/Pierre Albouy

Women in top leadership of parliament

The share of women among parliamentary Speakers globally – although it remains far from parity – had been increasing or remained largely stable in recent years. However, in 2025 that progress was disrupted. As of 1 January 2026, there were 54 women presiding over parliamentary chambers around the world. Together, they comprised 19.9% of all Speakers, nearly four percentage points lower than the share a year ago (23.7%). On average, male Speakers were likely to be slightly older than their female colleagues, with the average age of the former and latter being 62.4 years and 59.1 years respectively.³

Figure 4

Share of women Speakers of parliament (%), all chambers combined, 1995–2026

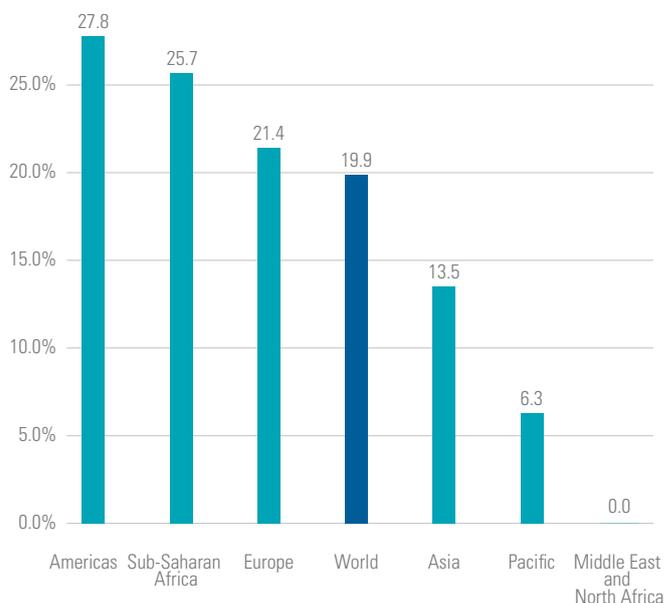


³ Calculated for 263 of the 271 Speakers for whom age data is available.

Further, there were only 12 women among the 75 new Speakers (16%) appointed or elected in 2025. They included two notable firsts – in Seychelles, [Azarel Ernesta became the Speaker of the National Assembly](#), becoming the first woman in the nation’s history to hold the office. In Namibia, a similar milestone saw former prime minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila [become elected as the Speaker](#) of the National Assembly – a first for the chamber.

Figure 5

Share of women Speakers of parliament (%) by region, 1 January 2026



Upper chambers were more likely to have a woman at their helm (with women comprising 27.4% of all Speakers) compared to lower chambers (16.6%). Women comprised 22.4% of Speakers in bicameral parliaments and only 16% in unicameral ones. In parliaments with two chambers, there were only four instances where both chambers were presided over by women as of 1 January 2026: the Bahamas, Belize, Mexico and South Africa. In contrast, 47 bicameral parliaments had men presiding over both houses.

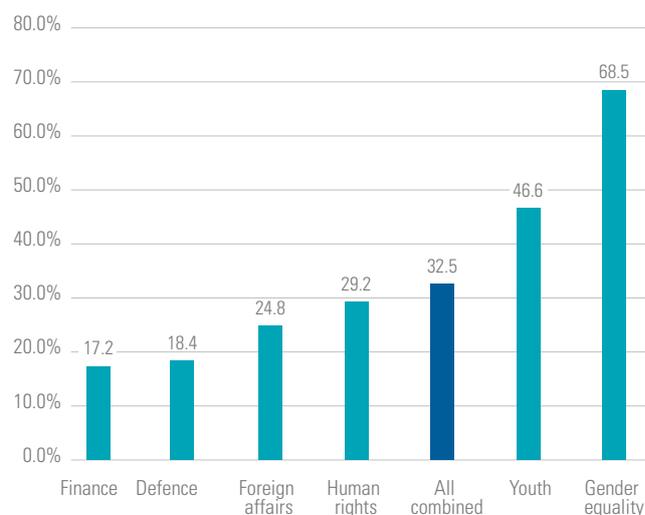
The Americas region had the highest share of female Speakers at 27.8%, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (25.7%), Europe (21.4%), Asia (13.5%) and the Pacific (6.3%). The MENA region had no female Speakers as of 1 January 2026. In all regions except Asia (where there was a small increase), the share of female Speakers shrank or remained the same compared to a year ago.

As of 1 January 2026, women held 344 out of 1,058 chair positions (32.5%) across six types of parliamentary committees (foreign affairs, defence, finance, human rights, gender equality and youth) recorded in the IPU's Parline database. This represents an increase from 27.9% in 2025. Part of this increase is explained by the inclusion of youth committees for the first time, a committee type with a comparatively high share of women chairs (46.6%).

This upward trend also reflects substantive gains in several core policy committees, with women's shares rising in foreign affairs (+4.1 percentage points), defence (+3.6 points) and finance (+2.7 points) compared with 2025. At the same time, women's share of committee chairs declined slightly in human rights (-1.3 points) and gender equality (-0.3 points).

Figure 6

Share of women chairs of standing parliamentary committees (%), 1 January 2026



However, excluding gender equality committees, women chair 25.7% of the remaining five types of parliamentary committees overall, and when both gender equality and youth committees are excluded, women's share drops further to 22.1%. Many committees on gender equality or youth do not focus exclusively on those issues; they often have broader social-sector mandates, such as on family affairs, education, culture, and welfare. This highlights the extent to which women's overall representation as committee chairs continues to be shaped by their concentration in gender-related and social policy committees, despite gains elsewhere.

Figure 7

Share of women committee chairs across topics (%) including and excluding gender equality

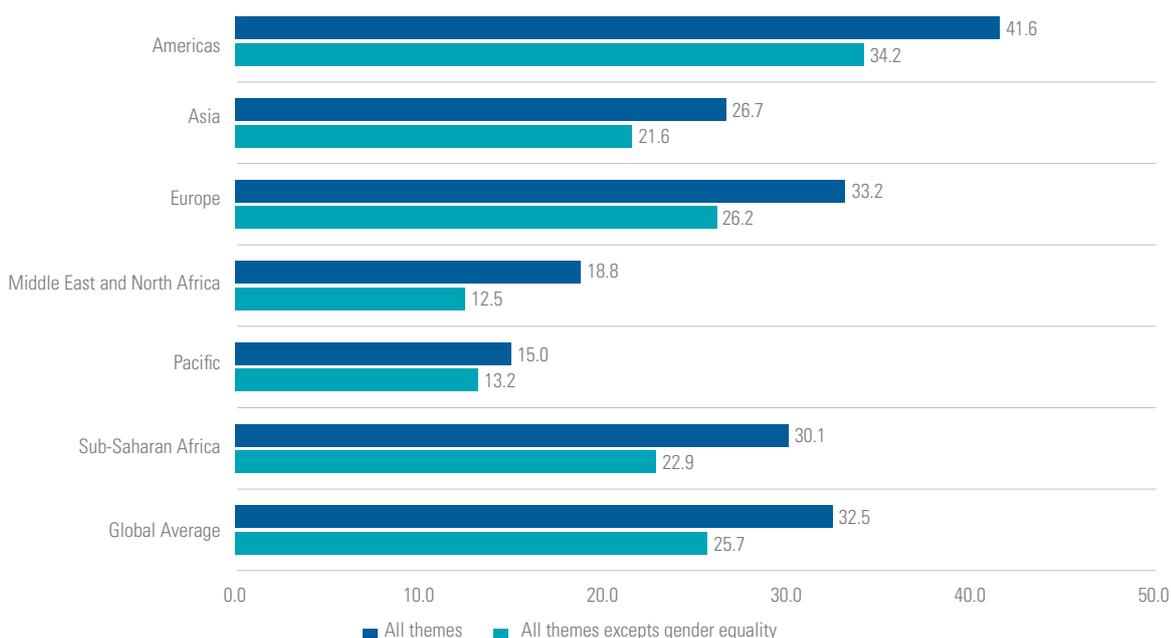
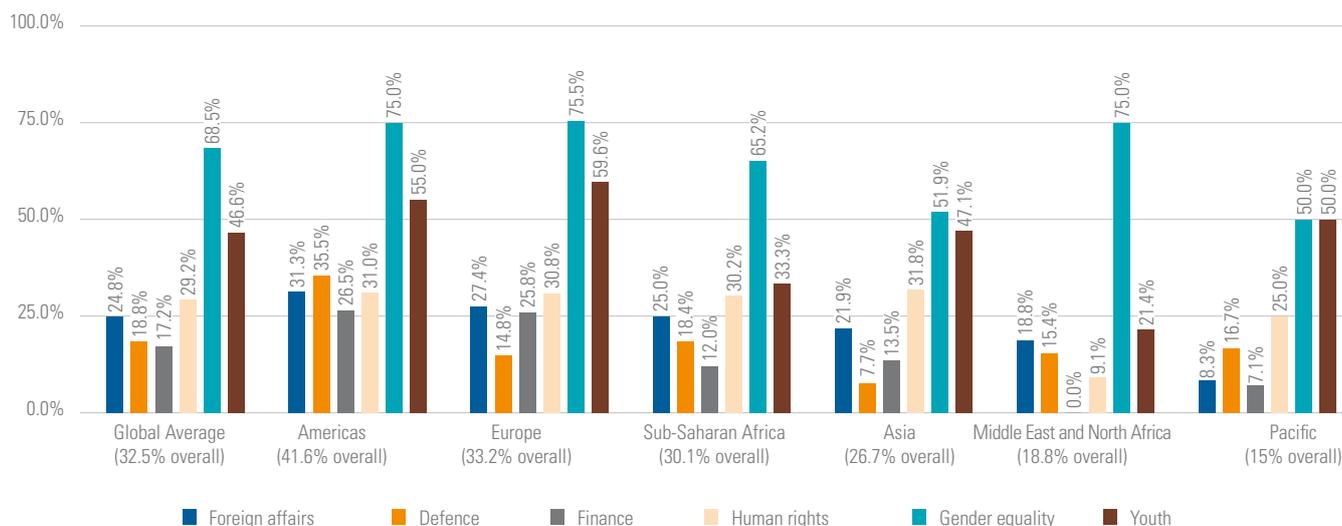


Figure 8

Share of women chairs of select parliamentary committees (%), per region and per committee type



Violence against women in parliaments

Over the years, major research reports from the IPU have brought to light the everyday experience of sexism, harassment and violence of women in parliaments. In 2025, even women in some of the most powerful political offices were not spared. These findings reflect a growing and disquieting trend worldwide.

Violence a routine occurrence against women in parliaments

In early 2025, the IPU released findings from its study on understanding the prevalence of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region. It followed similar previous studies focusing on the African and European regions. Violence against women in politics in the Asia-Pacific region remains high, the study found. Three in four of the women parliamentarians surveyed (76%) reported facing psychological violence, which includes sexist remarks and behaviour, the publication of denigrating images or remarks in the traditional media (newspapers, radio, television), intimidation, threats and online gender-based attacks. Six in ten women reported online attacks, much higher than the proportion of women who had reported attacks in previous studies focusing on the European and African regions (2018 and 2021).

The research was based on confidential interviews with 150 women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff (including 85 parliamentarians and 65 members of staff) from 33 (of the 37) countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Women from opposition parties, those aged below 40 years, those from minority communities and those who were not married were more susceptible to such violence, the research found further. Parliament remains the most common site where sexist remarks are made and the perpetrators are often male colleagues, either from the opposition party or from their own party. A quarter of women parliamentarians reported facing sexual violence, and another 13% reported physical violence. Women were more likely to report incidents of physical violence or when they had been threatened. However, when it came to sexist remarks and behaviour, reporting was almost absent.

Growing scrutiny of instances of sexism and violence in parliament

There has been growing attention to cases of alleged sexism, harassment or violence against women in parliaments across the globe. In 2025, media attention was given to such instances in countries as diverse as [Australia](#), [Malaysia](#), [Nigeria](#) and [Singapore](#). These concerned ageist comments against a young woman MP, remarks on a woman minister’s dress on the floor of parliament, suspension of a woman MP after she reported sexual misconduct, and misogynistic targeting of women candidates both in person and online.

In Bolivia, which has been a global pioneer in introducing a law to combat violence against women in politics (adopted in 2012), effective implementation remained weak, the European Union Election Observation Mission noted in [its report on the Bolivian elections of 2025](#), highlighting several incidents where women candidates faced sexist attacks.⁴

4 The Mission also noted, “These acts originated both within their own political parties and from external actors, most frequently through social media platforms”, and recommended that Bolivia “Strengthen the enforcement of the law” going forward.

Even women at the very top were not immune

Having more power does not always make women less susceptible to such attacks, although it is less likely to go unnoticed. In 2025, several notable women at the very top of the political order in their countries faced misogynistic comments, online harassment and physical violence.

During a motion of no confidence in March 2025, Samoan Prime Minister Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa [was heckled by opposition member of parliament Fuiono Tenina Crichton](#), who commented that Mata'afa's "leadership would have been remarkable" if only she "had gotten married" and had someone to "advise" her. In November, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum filed a complaint after a man [groped and harassed her on the streets](#) as she walked between meetings in the capital city. After the incident came to light, Citlalli Hernández, the country's Secretary for Women, said that they were [working on a presidential plan to address the issue](#). In Italy, a website was used to platform explicit content using morphed pictures of several notable women without their consent. The women included the Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and other female politicians from the country. The website was forced to shut down after European Union MP Alessandra Moretti lodged a police complaint after finding out that her photograph had been posted on it without her permission.

In the Philippines, the election commission steps in and a new law is introduced in Colombia

The Philippines' election saw several male candidates make disparaging remarks about their female opponents, as well as women in general. In response to these, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) [intervened](#) and classified the use of such language as an election offence.

This was happening for [the first time in Philippine election history](#) – COMELEC initially promulgated Resolution No. 11116, which listed acts, including "the commission, directly or indirectly of acts of bullying on the basis of HIV status, coercion, discrimination against women, discrimination against PWDs [persons with disabilities] on the use of public accommodations, gender-based harassment labeling, public ridicule against PWDs, vilification of PWDs, violation of an anti-discrimination ordinance" as election offences. It later supplemented the resolution by promulgating [Resolution No. 11127](#), expanding the scope to cover "all election related activities and venues including campaign rallies, caucuses, polling places, precincts, canvassing centers and online platforms as safe spaces". The supplementary resolution clearly listed all that it considered to be gender-based harassment, set out COMELEC's duty to ensure all election-related activities and venues were maintained as safe spaces and provided for the creation of the Special Task Force on Safeguarding Against Fear and Exclusion in Elections (Task Force SAFE).

Several candidates who had made offensive and discriminatory remarks were [issued notices](#) by the task force, [and one candidate – Christian "Ian" Sia – was disqualified by COMELEC](#).

In April 2025, the Colombian Parliament promulgated [Law 2453 of 2025](#) providing for the prevention and punishment of violence against women in politics. The law establishes measures for the prevention, response to, monitoring and punishment of violence against women in politics, in order to ensure that they can fully exercise their political and electoral rights. [The law explicitly recognizes violence against women in political life as a specific form of gender-based violence](#) and identifies the various forms that such violence can take in public and political spaces – from discrimination and harassment to exclusion and symbolic or physical violence – and establishes mechanisms for the prevention, response to, repudiation and punishment of such acts. Additionally, the law incorporates an intersectional approach, recognizing the role of factors such as nationality, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, disability and religion in increasing the risks of discrimination and violence. The law applies to electoral processes at all levels and also to internal party processes.

Diversity among women in parliaments

Ensuring equal participation and representation of women in parliaments is a matter of democratic justice but is also important for several reasons – from achieving genuine democracy and respecting human rights to attaining sustainable development and peace. Additionally, it is equally important that women are represented in all their diversity and that representation is not limited only to women from dominant groups. While women remain a minority in politics and most parliaments, women from historically disadvantaged groups and minority communities often remain largely absent in most parts of the world. While several nations have been able to narrow the gender gap in their parliaments by using gender quotas and more gender-sensitive voting systems, very few have made attempts to address barriers for other underrepresented groups such as ethnic and/or minority communities, indigenous communities, minority racial and religious groups, the LGBTQIA+ community, and people with disabilities, and fewer still have acknowledged and tried to remedy intersectional disadvantage for women.

Comprehensive and comparable data on women MPs and their socio-economic-ethnic backgrounds remains limited, making it difficult to fully map gaps or track progress. In 2025, some countries made remarkable progress not only in improving women's parliamentary representation, but also in electing diverse and representative MPs. For several others the latter remained a persistent gap. Despite the mixed gains, some specific developments stood out.

Some noteworthy developments

In Australia, disability activist Ali France became the first woman with a disability to win a seat in the House of Representatives, and Marion Scrymgour became the first aboriginal person to [chair the House of Representatives as a member of the Speaker's Panel](#). In Canada, the Prime Minister's cabinet of 28 included [three indigenous ministers](#), two of whom were women. Mandy Gull-Masty was named the nation's first indigenous Minister of Indigenous Services and Rebecca Chartrand was named the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs as well as the minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. In the United Kingdom, MP Dawn Butler became the first Black woman appointed to the Panel of Chairs in [parliament](#). In Germany, Heike Heubach became the first deaf person to sit in the Bundestag. Twenty-one year old [Julie Smejkalová](#) became the youngest-ever person to be elected as an MP in Czechia's history, while Charlotte Walker, who turned 21 on election day, became [Australia's youngest-ever senator](#).

Improved representation of MPs with disabilities – especially women – paves the way for a more accessible parliament in the United Kingdom

As more diverse women and MPs enter politics and parliaments, they also push these institutions to become more responsive to the needs of the larger communities. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the current parliament elected in 2024 has [the highest number of MPs with disabilities](#) ever – there are at least 13 MPs with disabilities or long-term physical or mental health concerns, with 9 of them being women.

This group includes Marie Tidball MP, who has been pushing for parliament to become more accessible. [In an interview with the BBC news media website](#), she highlighted that 22% of the voting-age population in the country was disabled, and it was essential to ensure that parliament's composition reflected those numbers. She added further that she wanted to ensure that parliament was inclusive for other disabled people who might come through the doors in the future. In 2025, the House of Commons Modernisation Committee, under the leadership of its chair at the time Lucy Powell MP, launched an inquiry to make parliament more accessible for those with disabilities. Its terms of reference include looking at aspects of procedures and practices of the House of Commons that pose barriers to MPs with disabilities and feasible adjustments that can be made to make parliament more accessible to both MPs as well as visitors with disabilities. The committee submitted its first report at the end of the year.

Thirty years of gender data on parliaments: The IPU's Parline database

The year 2026 marks three decades of the IPU's data platform Parline, which has over the years become one of the most authoritative sources for data on parliaments and parliamentarians, including gender data, and a key tool for advocacy to push for more gender-equal parliaments. Throughout much of its history spanning over 135 years, the IPU has been the definitive resource of information about the world's parliaments. Since the 1960s, it has been publishing comparative data on parliaments, initially in print format. In 1996, it launched Parline, an online version of its vast information with a view to making data more accessible. In 2018, Parline underwent a transformation and a newer – more modern, accessible and user-friendly – version was launched allowing users to see trends over time, as well as compare progress or regression between different regions of the world. Currently, Parline includes over 600 datapoints on parliaments.

Among other datasets, Parline has been maintaining data for women's representation, building on data collected since 1945, and made available online from 1996 with the launch of the platform. Users can cross-reference data on representation, political and electoral systems, leadership positions, quotas and more. Parline also tracks gender equality committees and women's caucuses, including contact information to support inter-parliamentary cooperation.

The IPU's data-collection practice is unique in that the Organization sources information directly from national parliaments rather than from national statistical offices. This trusted relationship, built over decades of engagement since the founding of the IPU in 1889, and supported by its near-universal membership of 183 parliaments, enables timely and direct access to information.

Along with maintaining extensive data for each individual chamber and parliament, the IPU tracks the global representation of women in parliaments and electoral outcomes through its flagship monthly rankings, reports on women's representation in national parliaments, campaigns for gender equality, as well as through the IPU-UN Women map on women in politics. Together, these publications and resources provide a strong evidence base to measure progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16, highlighting not only disparities by country and region, but also positive trends and effective practices. They help shape public debate, inform media narratives, and equip advocates and policymakers with the data needed to push for meaningful reform and advance gender parity.

Over the years, Parline has become a critical resource for parliamentarians, academics, civil society, media and anybody working on themes related to women's political and parliamentary participation. Each year, the platform is used by thousands of users around the world, and the platform's usage has been growing exponentially. Across all pages, the page featuring the monthly ranking of women in parliaments remains its most popular offering. Parline's gender data has been used to [inform several other key indices and documents](#), most notably the World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap Index, the United Nations' reports tracking progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Social Institutions and Gender Index of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The value of Parline and its gender data as a vital benchmarking tool has been witnessed in recent debates.

IPU data and its dissemination have been inspiring several countries to undertake reforms with a view to reducing the gender gap in their own parliaments. Some of the impact of this data was highlighted by delegates participating in the IPU's 150th Assembly held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in 2025. During a sitting of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. H.R. Fayez from Bahrain, a panellist representing the Arab Group, highlighted how the Forum had provided data on women parliamentarians across the world, inspiring Arab countries to strive for greater representation. Ms. S. Mikayilova from Azerbaijan, speaking in her capacity as a member of the Gender Partnership Group, mentioned that the data on women's representation in parliaments, especially for countries where women made up less than 10% of parliamentarians, had been reviewed by the Group and that they would be engaging with those delegations to support their progress. Ms. S.C. Anding from Malaysia and a representative of the Women Parliamentarians of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (WAIPA), citing data for ASEAN parliaments and comparing it to global averages, mentioned that the WAIPA had adopted a resolution on fostering gender-responsive parliaments for a resilient, connected, and inclusive ASEAN community in 2024. The resolution introduced the WAIPA Plan of Action and Implementation Framework on Promoting Women's Political Participation and Leadership 2024–2030, which aimed to accelerate women's political participation. Several other delegates mentioned other similar impacts of Parline data and the IPU's work on driving greater parliamentary representation of women in their regions.



In 2025, the IPU Governing Council endorsed a Plan of action for gender parity in parliaments to boost progress worldwide.
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Conclusion

2025 was a milestone year for global action on gender parity, marking, most notably, 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In this context, among other initiatives, the IPU Governing Council endorsed a [Plan of action for gender parity in parliaments](#) in October 2025, marking a commitment by the parliamentary community towards achieving parity in numbers, parity in influence and a parity culture.

While the world witnessed some progress in women's parliamentary representation, the gains remained limited in continuation of the recent trend of stagnating progress overall. Women's parliamentary representation moved forward only by 0.3 percentage points for a second year in a row, reaching 27.5%. If progress were to continue to move at this pace, it would take the world an estimated 75 years to reach gender parity.

Equality in positions of influence show a stark contrast. The share of women Speakers dropped to just below 20% on 1 January 2026. On a more positive note, women hold a record share of 32.5% of chair positions across six types of parliamentary committees, but when gender committees are excluded women only account for 25.7% of such positions.

Similarly, while there is growing evidence of representation of women in all their diversity, progress remains limited. In 2025, some countries made remarkable progress in electing more diverse and representative parliaments, including unprecedented numbers of young women and women with disabilities. Yet, the overall share of seats held by young women, for instance, [decreased between 2023 and 2025](#).

Quotas remain critical in enhancing women's parliamentary representation. It has been encouraging to see that several countries around the world have adopted and strengthened their quota laws, and this has been reflected in the gender composition of their legislatures. However, sometimes quotas can become mere checkmarks when not designed well or followed in true spirit. The risk of them becoming ceilings rather than floors, almost capping women's representation, also remains real, as witnessed in parliaments where quota requirements are met, but only just.

Violence – often stemming from within parliaments – continues to remain a serious risk and very real threat preventing women from participating and thriving in politics on an equal footing with men. Violence against women in parliaments must be addressed as a serious priority and parliaments must take the lead. Only a handful of countries have introduced laws that clearly identify different forms of violence and prescribe preventive and remedial measures. More parliaments will have to step up on this front if they are sincere in their commitment to equality and democracy.

As the world moves forward, progress will be guaranteed by the sincerity and intentionality of how these legal mandates are designed and delivered. It is also time to start thinking of representation from an intersectional lens, and design measures that can facilitate not only more gender-equal parliaments, but also where MPs reflect their constituencies in their full diversity.



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