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Canadian Council of Muslim Women
Conseil canadien des femmes musulmanes

MUSLIM WOMEN IN CANADA: FACT SHEETS

NUMBER 3

MUSLIM WOMEN'S CIVIC PARTICIPATION

This fact sheet is third in a series designed to provide facts that will inform the broader Canadian society and Muslim women themselves about critical issues regarding this growing segment of the Canadian population.

The facts below are extracted from the CCMW report entitled, *Muslim Women's Civic Participation: From Polling Booths to Parliament*, by Daood Hamdani. For the complete report, click on <http://www.ccmw.com/>.

Muslim Female voter turnout at general elections

- Muslims are the least likely of the faith communities to exercise the franchise. They are one-third less likely to vote than the Hindus and Sikhs, with whom they share some key demographic characteristics, and 40% less likely than the Jewish community, which is estimated to have the highest voter turnout rate.
- Among Muslims, Arabs are more active than the South Asians. 60% of the mosques in the United States, where the Arabs made up most of the congregation, write or call a politician versus 47% of the South Asian mosques.
- Muslim women have a lower propensity to vote than men. Only 39% are estimated to have cast ballot in the 2000 federal general election, as compared with 45% for males. The apathy was more evident at the provincial polls with only 40% of the eligible voters voting, and at the municipal level – where decisions affecting their neighbourhoods and children's schools are made – only 28 per cent exercised the franchise.
- Muslim female voter turnout rate increased to 43% in the 2004 federal general election, but did not keep pace with the males 50% of whom voted that year.

Involvement in party politics

- While a Muslim male won a seat in the Alberta legislature in the mid-1970s, nomination of a Muslim woman to contest election in 1993 at the federal level was a milestone in women's entry in party politics.
- In the 1997 and 2000 federal elections, there was only one Muslim female candidate running on the ticket of a major party.
- The number of Muslim female candidates increased to four in 2004. They accounted for about 24% of all Muslim candidates who ran for any party, including the small ones, that year.

Party affiliation

- Muslim women contest elections as Canadians who identify themselves with Islam, as do other politicians. This is evident in the range of views they hold on economic, political and social issues. At the national level, they have represented centrist and left-of-the-centre parties, including the Liberal, NDP and Bloc Quebecois.
- While the NDP nominated three of the four Muslim female candidates in 2004 federal election, no Muslim female has ever been nominated by the Conservative Party or its forerunners.

Muslim women in parliament

- At present, there are only two Muslim women serving in a provincial or federal legislature.
- The first Muslim woman to be elected to a legislature in Canada won a seat in the Quebec National Assembly in 1995. She is currently serving her third consecutive term.
- A Muslim woman was elected to the national parliament in 2004.

For the detailed report click on:

[http://www.ccmw.com/In The Press/Muslim Women's Civic Participation: From Polling Booths to Parliament.pdf](http://www.ccmw.com/In%20The%20Press/Muslim%20Women's%20Civic%20Participation:%20From%20Polling%20Booths%20to%20Parliament.pdf)