

# The United Arab Emirates

Reviewing the Status of Women's Freedoms



# Governmental Participation

# Statistics

The government plays an active role in helping to increase women's rights and is currently one of the best Middle Eastern Countries for women's rights.

The government values its women and views gender equality as a very important issue.

66% of government workers in the UAE are women<sup>[1]</sup>

23% of the FNC is composed of women<sup>[2]</sup>

27% of the UAE Cabinet is composed of women<sup>[3]</sup>

20% of the diplomatic corps is female<sup>[4]</sup>



1. <http://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/women-make-up-two-thirds-of-government-workforce-in-uae>

2. [http://www.uae-embassy.org/sites/default/files/Women\\_in\\_the\\_UAE\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.uae-embassy.org/sites/default/files/Women_in_the_UAE_Eng.pdf)

3. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-uae-now-has-more-female-cabinet-ministers-than/>

4. [uae-embassy.org/about-uae/women-uae](http://uae-embassy.org/about-uae/women-uae)



## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES THE CABINET





# Women's Rights & Protections Guaranteed by the Government

*"Equality, social justice, the provision of safety and security and equality of opportunity for all citizens shall be the bases of the community."* - **Article 14, UAE Constitution**

*"Society shall be responsible for protecting childhood and motherhood and shall protect minors and others unable to look after themselves for any reason..."* - **Article 16, UAE Constitution**

*"All persons shall be equal before the law. No discrimination shall be practi[c]ed between citizens of the Union by reason of race, nationality, religious belief, or social position."* - **Article 25, UAE Constitution**

*"Public service shall be open to all citizens on a basis of equality of circumstances between them, in accordance with the provisions of the law."*  
- **Article 35, UAE Constitution**

# Efforts at Creating Equality

The government has taken many steps to ensure that women are granted equal rights within society.

Not only do these measures include equal rights for women in the government, but also in terms of payment for the work they do, opportunities available to them, and more.

CEDAW<sup>[1]</sup>

Gender Balance Council<sup>[2]</sup>

Increased number of women in the UAE Cabinet<sup>[3]</sup>



1. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

2. [uae-embassy.org/about-uae/women-uae](http://uae-embassy.org/about-uae/women-uae)

3. [http://www.uae-embassy.org/sites/default/files/Women\\_in\\_the\\_UAE\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.uae-embassy.org/sites/default/files/Women_in_the_UAE_Eng.pdf)







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- [uae-embassy.org/about-uae/women-uae](http://www.uae-embassy.org/about-uae/women-uae)
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## - Pictures

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- <http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cedaw/cedaw.html>
- <http://www.sharjah.gov.ae/>
- <http://www.dubaiinternetmarketing.com/sharjah-sharjah-chamber-of-commerce-industry-government-departments-services-sharjah-uae-2011-12-26.php>

Education

# Education in the UAE

Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan

1975: 54% men and 31% women

Now: around 95% for both

K-12: 910,000 students in 1,174 schools (2013-2014)

Universities: Public universities are free

Highest participation rates of secondary school to university in the world (95% girls, 80% boys)



<http://www.uae-embassy.org/about-uae/education-uae>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayed\\_bin\\_Sultan\\_Al\\_Nahyan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayed_bin_Sultan_Al_Nahyan)

# Mother of the UAE



Fatima Bint Mubarak

*Illiteracy is the first and foremost enemy of women particularly and society at large...Education is the window through which women observe and learn from the cultural heritage of different nations.*

## Education Reforms:

Women Literacy and Education Strategy: 1975 (4 years after country's foundation)

Increased the female enrollment rate

<http://motherofthenation.ae/achievements/women-empowerment/>

<https://alchetron.com/Fatima-bint-Mubarak-Al-Ketbi-534422-W>

# Gender Gap

Growing Attention to Gender  
Issues in Education

School Type	% of Males	% of Females
Primary	85	82
Secondary	62	66
Tertiary	12	39

Source: UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008*

Literacy Rates (2015)	Male	Female	Total Population
UAE	93.10%	95.80%	93.80%
Turkey	98.40%	91.80%	95%
Syria	91.70%	81%	86.40%
Afghanistan	52%	24.20%	38.20%
Pakistan	69.50%	45.80%	57.90%
Qatar	97.40%	96.80%	97.30%
World Average	74.21%	65.06%	69.63%



# Employment

## Women in the workplace

- Many women are paid employment
- Male guardianship
  - Disobedient under law
- Growing banking influence
- Backbone of family life
- Maintain the heritage

# Need for women's participation

IT'S CRUCIAL

Forefront of directing change

Women make up 17.7% of the electoral college

Women make up 22.5 % of the FNC

Government is now making sure women are avidly represented in the decision making

Women participation in the economy has gone from 9.6% in 1886 to 33.4% IN 2007

# Influential Emirati women

Dr. Maryam Matar: dedicated her life to battling genetic disorders that are running rampant in the UAE such as thalassaemia

Lubna Qassim: member of the Emirates NBD Asset Management group executive board and a Lebanese a bank

Dr Amal Al Qubaisi: first woman to win seat on the Federal National council appointed by the Abu Dhabi Electoral College

I

Dr. Maryam Matar



Lubna Qassim



Dr. Amal Al Qubasi



# Recent milestones for women

Two women ambassadors

First female emirati pilot

First female emirati judge

First Women's army college

Creation of the Special Women's Corps



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# Family Traditions/Laws

# Women's Family Roles and Dress

Mario Nicolas

# Veiling Restrictions/Choice of Clothing

- In 2012, two Emirati women launched a popular Twitter campaign advocating for foreigners to dress modestly within their country, but what did the UAE think?
- Many choose to veil because of personal religious beliefs, and nearly 100% of women are Muslim
- “Men should not be bare-chested away from the beach and women are advised not to wear short skirts and to keep their shoulders covered”(2).
- A ton of western clothing is sold in Dubai; over 200,000 visitors a day!
- Despite cultural norms and restrictions, it could be worse
- Saudi Arabia: “I was forced to wear the veil and I wish no other woman had to suffer it”-Nesrine Malik
- The Sharjah Emirate restricts women from wearing swimsuits on public beaches; Dubai on the other hand...

<http://www.uaeinteract.com/travel/ttips.asp#cloth>



# Which is which?

\*Cite sources (8) and (12)



\*Cite source (9)



# Marriage

- Tribal division, lawyers, and cultural reasons; Fatima
- “A woman must be respected and supported by the laws, staying away from the societal barriers that protect the males and creates pressure on the women under the pretext of protection”(4).
- Women need parental permission before remarrying, due to a 2005 law
- Often forced; Sharia law
- Guardians only need to have reached puberty, as one court case demonstrated.
- "If her father is not available, or deceased, then it would be her son, followed by her brother"(5).
- Certain people want this rule, but with age limits
- Penal Code, Article 365 (10); Jailing and deportation
- Women need a guardian's approval to marry one person
- Women need court orders to apply for divorce and it is on limited grounds, but men have free reigns

<http://dubai.ae/en/Lists/Articles/DispForm.aspx?ID=23&category=Citizens>

# Reproductive Freedoms

- Women are absolutely prohibited from receiving abortions by their own will
- Doctors can receive five years imprisonment for performing abortions
- Abortifacients may not be issued
- If a woman's life is in danger, approved gynecologists are allowed to perform abortions.
- Husband or guardian permission is required
- Causes many to turn to illegal, self-induced abortions or to get an abortion in another country



# Domestic Violence

## Domestic Violence

- There are no specific laws against domestic violence outside of general assault charges. Rape charges are difficult to report; *zina*
- Penal Code article 53; 2010
- Police discouragement of reports

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