

# FIRST CLASS

PROFILES OF  
WOMEN MPS  
& SENATORS  
IN JORDAN

2003-2007



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# NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

Democracy depends on legislatures that represent citizens and oversee the executive, independent judiciaries that safeguard the rule of law, political parties that are open and accountable, and elections in which voters freely choose their representatives in government. Acting as a catalyst for democratic development, NDI bolsters the institutions and processes that allow democracy to flourish.

**Build Political and Civic Organizations:** NDI helps build the stable, broad-based and well-organized institutions that form the foundation of a strong civic culture. Democracy depends on these mediating institutions — the voice of an informed citizenry, which link citizens to their government and to one another by providing avenues for participation in public policy.

**Safeguard Elections:** NDI promotes open and democratic elections. Political parties and governments have asked NDI to study electoral codes and to recommend improvements. The Institute also provides technical assistance for political parties and civic groups to conduct voter education campaigns and to organize election monitoring programs. NDI is a world leader in election monitoring, having organized international delegations to monitor elections in dozens of countries, helping to ensure that polling results reflect the will of the people.

**Promote Openness and Accountability:** NDI responds to requests from leaders of government, parliament, political parties and civic groups seeking advice on matters from legislative procedures to constituent service to the balance of civil-military relations in a democracy. NDI works to build legislatures and local governments that are professional, accountable, open and responsive to their citizens.

International cooperation is key to promoting democracy effectively and efficiently. It also conveys a deeper message to new and emerging democracies that while autocracies are inherently isolated and fearful of the outside world, democracies can count on international allies and an active support system. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., with field offices in every region of the world, NDI complements the skills of its staff by enlisting volunteer experts from around the world, many of whom are veterans of democratic struggles in their own countries and share valuable perspectives on democratic development.





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The election of an unprecedented number of women (six) to the Lower House of Parliament in 2003 was a remarkable step toward strengthening women's political participation in Jordan. The subsequent appointment of eight women to the Senate also contributed to the establishment of a "first class" of Jordanian women legislators to challenge traditional attitudes about women's role in society. In the last four years, women Members of Parliament (MPs) faced unflattering press stories and harsh criticism for not being sufficiently active nor influential on women's issues and legislation. The women MPs were being scrutinized as they served in the first Parliament after the introduction of a quota system and the first Parliament after a three-year absence following dissolution by Royal Decree in 2000. For their part, women Senators, who collectively form an impressive corps of distinguished and experienced figures, received limited media coverage and their many remarkable efforts went largely unnoticed.

The lack of attention to the accomplishments of these remarkable women was demonstrated when NDI focus group research revealed that Jordanians, both male and female, could not describe the accomplishments of women in Parliament. However, these women senators and MPs have reached unprecedented positions within the legislature, have shouldered great responsibility and have many accomplishments to showcase -- accomplishments that have not yet been recognized or applauded.

The purpose of this book is to present the profiles, stories and accomplishments of this first class of 14 Jordanian women legislators who served in Parliament for the period 2003-2007. This publication is the result of interviews with women parliamentarians and their supporters, as well as a review of key reports and documents on women's political participation in Jordan. It showcases who these women are and what their legacy has been during these critical four years in Jordan's history.

If more women are to run for office and get elected in Jordan and if the public and decision-making elite are to further support legislation and initiatives that strengthen women's political participation, the women parliamentarians must be visible and must share their experiences -- challenges as well as successes. This book provides an outlet for them to do just that. Their mere presence in Parliament has in itself been a tremendous achievement. They are, simply, First Class.



Roula Attar  
Resident Country Director, Jordan  
National Democratic Institute for International Affairs  
November 2007



# FIRST CLASS

PROFILES OF  
WOMEN MPs  
& SENATORS  
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2003 - 2007

## HISTORY OF JORDANIAN WOMEN & PARLIAMENT

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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is an independent sovereign Arab state and its system of government is parliamentary with a hereditary monarchy. The legislative power is vested in the National Assembly and the King. The National Assembly is a bicameral Parliament consisting of a Senate (Upper House) and a House of Representatives (Lower House). The Senate currently consists of 55 members appointed by the King and the House of Representatives consists of 110 members, elected by secret ballot in a general direct election.

According to the Jordanian Constitution, all Jordanians are equal before the law. Since 1974, women have been accorded the full right to vote and to stand for election. The 1984 by-election was the first opportunity for Jordanian women to exercise their right to vote. There were no women candidates that year.

In 1989, parliamentary life was fully restored in Jordan and elections took place with 12 women candidates, none of whom gained sufficient votes to win any of the 80 seats. In the 1993 election, three women stood as candidates in the election and one woman, Toujan Faisal, was elected. In 1997, 17 women candidates stood for election but none were elected. In the 2001 by-election, a woman candidate was chosen by members of the Lower House.

In the 2003 parliamentary elections, Jordan introduced a quota system which allocated six out of the 110 seats to women candidates. In that election, 54 women ran for office and six women were elected to the 14<sup>th</sup> Parliament. Eight women also served in the Senate since. These fourteen women parliamentarians represent the First Class of women legislators in the history of Jordan.



# MP

## INSAF AL KHAWALDEH

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With 23 years of experience as a school principal, MP Insaf Al Khawaldeh knows how to handle chaotic situations and diverse personalities. However, nothing compares to the barrage of phone calls she now gets from the people of her district. As she explains, *“I have two phones now and they both ring day and night.”* Al Khawaldeh was elected in 2003 in Tafleleh’s 2<sup>nd</sup> electoral district, which houses the historic Dana natural reserve. As an MP, she has brought many services and development projects to her area, including a cultural and entertainment center that now provides young people in Tafleleh with a place to socialize, network and simply have fun.

Born in Tafleleh in 1958, Al Khawaldeh prepared for her career in education with a Diploma from the College of Education in Amman. She continues her studies today, seeking a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology from the University of Sudan. She is also a member of the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), the Jordanian Women’s Union (JWU) and several charitable societies.

Al Khawaldeh has focused her work in Parliament on creating jobs, particularly in the smaller towns and more rural areas of Jordan. With her depth of experience in education, she has also passionately advocated for children’s issues. Recognizing that better education systems and economic growth go hand in hand, Al Khawaldeh has worked hard to improve both. She has served on several key committees in the Lower House, including Education, Culture and Youth, Tourism, Archaeology and Public Services, as well as Rural and Bedouin Affairs.

The mother of eight children, Al Khawaldeh has encouraged her kids to value public service and believes that they might follow in her footsteps one day. As she told both her own children and the countless others that she has taught, *“Helping people is the best thing you can do.”*



# MP

## NARIMAN AL ROUSAN

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MP Nariman Al Rousan grew up learning the value and importance of civil service from her politically active family. Born in Ramtha in the Northern Irbid governorate in 1951, Al Rousan's early exposure to politics motivated her to seek and later serve in political office. She was elected with the support of her tribe in 2003 in Irbid's 5<sup>th</sup> electoral district.



*"Since childhood, I had ambition to work for the general public and to be a public figure. I was a little discouraged when there was a woman cabinet minister and it wasn't me. Then there was a woman judge and it wasn't me. So I decided to run for Parliament and here I am."*



During her time in the Lower House, Al Rousan reached an important position in the Permanent Bureau of the House as Assistant to the Speaker. She also served on the Rural and Bedouin Affairs, the Public Freedoms and the Labor and Social Development committees.

Al Rousan received a Bachelor's degree in Law from the University of Alexandria in Egypt and practiced law for nearly twenty years. She has been involved with numerous organizations that tackle important legal issues during her career and played an active role in both the Higher Council for Youth and the Sports League for Arab Women.

Al Rousan has used her time in Parliament to fight for women's and children's legal rights. She has advocated for amendments to the Personal Status Law that would allow a Jordanian woman married to a foreigner to pass her citizenship on to her children, something that is still not fully possible today. *"This is something that has not progressed sufficiently but we are in the process of doing it."*

She emphasizes that preparation is critical for women to make an impact in Parliament.

*"Training is important. It is not the only factor that will allow women to perform well, however. It is also the woman's personal motivation and determination to achieve."*



# MP

## ADAB AL SAOUD

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The youngest person to serve in the 14<sup>th</sup> Parliament, Adab Al Saoud is the voice of a new generation in the Lower House, having been elected in Tafleh's 1<sup>st</sup> electoral district. Speaking of the number of women now in Parliament, Al Saoud proclaims, *"Our accomplishments are scattered here and there but the thing is that our involvement in the legislative process is the accomplishment."*

Born in Tafleh in 1969, Al Saoud attended the University of Jordan and obtained a Bachelor's and a Master's degrees in Geography. She worked as a Program Coordinator with the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) as well as an Assistant Director in the Ministry of Education. She is a member of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW).

While in Parliament, Al Saoud served as the Rapporteur for the National Guidance Committee and a member of the Arab and Foreign Relations Committee, as well as the Health and Environment Committee. Entering the Parliament with no political experience, she explains that learning the rules and learning how to deal with constituents has been one of her greatest challenges.

*"One of the most difficult issues that I face is being involved in matters other than legislation and the general public expects us to deal with issues that do not pertain to legislation, as such. When I came to Parliament I didn't have any clue about how the legislature operates and we had to learn on the job... the legislative process is a complicated process that requires MPs to read a lot and understand a lot."*

Al Saoud notes that, *"I do not have any difficulty participating and dealing with the male MPs because we look at ourselves as being MPs not as female MPs and male MPs. I reject the notion that there are laws for women and laws for men. Whatever laws are being considered and being voted upon are laws for society as a whole and that includes women and men."*



مجلس النواب

MP

## ZAKIEH AL SHAMAYLEH

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Born in Karak in 1941, MP Zakieh Al Shamayleh was elected to Parliament in 2003 in Karak's 1<sup>st</sup> electoral district. Throughout her tenure in the Lower House, she has been an effective voice for education and has served on the Education, Culture and Youth Committee, as well as the Tourism, Archaeology and Public Services Committee.

Al Shamayleh has a Diploma from the Dar Al Mualimat (Teachers' Institute) in Ramallah. She was a teacher with the Ministry of Education and a Principal at the Karak Secondary School as well as the Head of Housing for the Girls' dormitory in Mu'tah University. She has also served as the Head of Internal Coordination Unit in the Department of Local Community Development Studies at Mu'tah University.

Al Shamayleh is a member in the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW). She is proud to be representing women in Parliament but looks forward to hopefully having more women in the Lower House soon.

She is married and has four children.



# MP

## FALAK JAMA'ANI

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MP Falak Jama'ani was elected to Parliament in 2003 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> electoral district in Madaba, following a distinguished career in dentistry. After receiving her Bachelor's degree in Dentistry and Dental Surgery from the University of Damascus in Syria, she went on to earn a Master's degree in Prosthetic Dentistry from the University of London in 1986. She served as the Head of the Dentistry Department at the Marka Military Hospital and Head of the Dentistry Surgical Department at the King Hussein Medical Center. She remains a member of the Jordanian Dentists' Union today.



Jama'ani was the first Jordanian woman to serve as Deputy Speaker of the Lower House in 2006-2007 and used this post to further highlight the important role that women can play in the legislative process. Since her election, Jama'ani has tirelessly promoted health, women's and children's issues in Parliament and was President of the Health and Environment Committee. She is well-regarded by her constituents, having managed to create several industrial projects in her district, thus creating much-needed jobs. She is seen as an MP that secured rights for those that previously did not have them.

Jama'ani has been awarded the medal of Military Merit, the Medal of Independence and the Jordanian Kawkab Medal of Honor for her work. She continues that tradition of service in Parliament.

She is married and has four children.



# MP

## HAYAT MASSIMI

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MP Hayat Massimi is the first woman political party member to serve in the Jordanian Parliament. Massimi was elected in 2003 in the 1<sup>st</sup> electoral district in the Zarqa governorate and secured by far the highest number of votes among all 54 women candidates that year. With just over 10% of the total votes cast in her constituency, she almost won a seat outright, missing out by a margin of just 54 votes. As an active member of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party well before her election to Parliament, Massimi credits this participation with her success in politics.

*“My advice to future candidates is first to be members of political parties because this is where they will get support and encouragement to go forward.”*

Married with five children, Massimi believes, *“One accomplishment is the fact that I am able to be a mother of five children and also be a public figure and there is no conflict between the two.”* Born in the West Bank town of Nablus, Massimi received a Bachelor’s degree in Pharmacy from the University of Jordan. She later became the Assistant to the Dean of the Islamic College after teaching at the college for eight years. She is the Head of the Women’s Committee of the Jordanian Association of Pharmacists and a member of the Society for the Preservation of the Holy Quran.

Massimi was the Rapporteur of the Health and Environment Committee and a member of the National Guidance and the Labor and Social Development committees in the Lower House. She is proud to be a representative for both women and Islam noting, *“Accomplishments, as I view them, are first that there are women represented in Parliament... the IAF is looked upon as not allowing women to participate and being a woman member of Parliament and from the Islamic party is proof that this is not the case.”*

Massimi sees extraordinary potential for women in politics, explaining, *“One of the things that should be considered and understood is the role that women can play in peace-making. In my judgment, Parliament has not accomplished the goals that should have been accomplished to their fullest.”*



# SENATOR

## LEILA SHARAF

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The first woman to join the Jordanian Senate in 1989, Leila Sharaf has paved the way for the women who have come after her. As she explains, *“I was the first woman in the Jordanian Senate and you would think that I would have had difficulty with my fellow Senators. I did not, because Senators are usually appointed from the leadership of the parties and they are usually enlightened and mature. Instead, I faced difficulties in getting to know how to perform my job as a Senator. There were no women before me in the Senate that I could learn from.”*

Born in Beirut in 1940, Sharaf earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Education from the American University of Cairo (AUC) and a Master’s Degree in Literature from the American University of Beirut (AUB). She served as Minister of Information from 1984-1985 and was appointed to the National Consultative Council in 1982.

She is Chair of the Board of Trustees at Philadelphia University in Jordan, and Vice-president of the Arab Foundation for Modern Thought. She also serves on a number of prominent boards including the Board of Trustees of the Arab Thought Forum and its Executive Committee in Jordan, the American University of Beirut both in Lebanon and New York, the American Center for Oriental Research in Jordan and the USA, and the America-Mid East Educational and Training Services in Washington, D.C. She is also a member of the International Academic Council of the United Nations University for Peace.

Sharaf is committed to serving the cause of democracy and human rights especially the rights of women in the Arab World. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Human Rights in Tunisia, the Amman Center for Human Rights (ACHRS), and a former member of the

Board of the Arab Organization for Human rights in Egypt, as well as a founding member and former Vice-President of its branch in Jordan.

Sharaf has been involved with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) since 1977 and currently serves on its Board of Trustees, having filled the positions of both President and Vice-President of the Society in the past. She has continued to dedicate herself to preservation, recently fighting for protection of Jordan’s forests. She proudly explains, *“The law would have given forest land to investors for projects. We were objecting to that because this would endanger all the forests in Jordan. I led the battle against the amendment and we won unanimously.”*

Sharaf is also a strong advocate for women playing an increasingly bigger role in Jordan’s political and legislative process. *“I hope that women in Jordan will be more numerous in the Lower House as well as in the Upper House. We are half of the population and we should get our fair share. We should be half of the Parliament.”*

This will only happen, she believes, when women are exposed and immersed in the civic, economic and social issues facing the country. *“The most useful way to prepare yourself for the decision-making levels is to participate in nongovernmental organizations, in the business world, and in the cultural world because you get exposure. Second, you get experience and you get enlightened to the problems and the issues being discussed in the country in a mature way and a more direct way. Then you can be more prepared to reach decision-making positions.”*

Sharaf is a member of the Environmental, Health and Social Development Affairs Committee, as well as the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Senate.



# SENATOR

## SUBHIEH AL MA'ANI

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Senator Subhieh Al Ma'ani was appointed to the Jordanian Senate in 1997 and served until 2005. As a businesswoman with vast experience in the fields of health and agriculture, Al Ma'ani brought a unique perspective to the Upper House, particularly to the Agricultural and Water Affairs Committee on which she served.

Born in Haifa in 1931, Al Ma'ani holds a degree in Education and serves on the Board of Trustees of Modern Schools. She was the General Director then Chairman of the Arab Company for Medical and Agricultural Products from 1976 to 2003. She contributed to key national policy efforts such as the Jordan First initiative, serving as a member of its Anti-Corruption Committee. She is a strong advocate for transparency and has actively supported anti-corruption legislation through her work in Parliament.

Al Ma'ani is an active public figure and employs her network towards advancing social issues such as health and education. She is a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Council for Family Affairs, Deputy Director of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women (NFBPW), as well as the President of the Society for Owners of Drugstores and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Jordan University Hospitals.

Al Ma'ani also works with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to contribute to securing a better future for Jordanian children.



# SENATOR

## SALWA AL MASRI

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While Senator Salwa Al Masri has held various public posts, her focus has always been on fighting to ensure everyone's right to live in peace and with dignity. While serving as Minister of Social Development in 1995-1996, she stated, *"The human dimension has never been left aside in Jordan's development policies. Despite its limited resources, Jordan has been a model country in creating a favorable environment for social integration, having absorbed three large waves of displaced persons. It has protected fundamental freedom and allowed all persons to participate in the democratic process."*

Appointed to the Senate in 2001, Al Masri currently serves as the First Vice President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians. She also serves in the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee and the Environmental, Health and Social Development Affairs Committee in the Senate. Al Masri is a strong advocate for developing social norms and changing cultural beliefs towards positive acceptance of women's participation in political life.

Al Masri was born in Nablus in the West Bank and received her Master's Degree in Population Studies from the University of Jordan. She has been a teacher and research assistant at the University of Jordan, Director of the Health Department and Community Development Program for Soldiers' Families and Welfare Society, and Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) "Women and Development" program at the Nour Al Hussein Foundation.

She acknowledges that challenges abound but is optimistic about the future of women in Jordan. She adds, *"Jordan is aware of the need to involve all of society in the struggle against poverty and unemployment, and to promote the partnership of the public and private sectors. It has also stressed the importance of the advancement of women."*

Al Masri is married and has three children.



# SENATOR

## MAY ABUL SAMEN

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Senator May Abul Samen has always had a deeply rooted commitment to education and her work in the Senate has continued this tradition. *“Because I have worked in the education field before, I support all the causes that are in the interest of our women and young ladies especially in the area of education.”*

Born in Salt in 1951, Abul Samen’s experience with education includes a Master’s degree in Educational Management and a Bachelor’s degree in Arabic Language from the University of Jordan. She also served as the Headmistress of Al Salt Secondary School for Girls.

Abul Samen brings to the Senate knowledge of the issues confronting rural and Bedouin women communities. As the Secretary General of the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), she has worked with these communities on issues of social and economic development. She also serves as a member on the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), the Royal Committee for Human Rights, the Board of Trustees of the Al Hussein University, the Higher Council of Information and the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR).

Appointed in 2003, Abul Samen serves on the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee and the Environmental, Health and Social Development Affairs Committee. She explains, *“The role of the committee is a very important one and has its effect on the laws to be legislated, especially those laws that affect women’s causes. So we have put the pressure on to influence the decision in favor of women.”*

Abul Samen is excited about the future of women in politics and optimistic about what can be accomplished. *“I wish my female colleagues would direct all their energies towards reaching their goals without fail. Women are in all branches of government. They are in the executive branch, legislative branch, judiciary system - the political leadership and support is unlimited. I would like to convey to my colleagues that opportunities are wide open to them and that they need to take advantage of this to prosper.”*

Abul Samen is married and has six children.



# SENATOR

## ROWAIDA AL MAAYTAH

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The first Jordanian woman to be appointed as a University President, University Vice-President, Director General of a teaching hospital and Dean of a University, Senator Rowaida Al Maaytah has an enduring commitment to both health and education. In 1996, she received the Shouman Award from the Young Arab Scientists in the field of Medical Sciences, in addition to having been the recipient of several awards from American universities over the years.

Born in Karak in 1955, Al Maaytah received a Master's and Doctorate Degree in Public Health from Tulane University in the USA. She has held several key positions throughout her career including Director of the Jordanian-Canadian Project for the Development of Education and Human Resources, Vice President of the University of Science and Technology, Director of the King Abdullah I Hospital at the University and President of Hashemite University. Al Maaytah was also the first Director for the Arab Women Organization at the Arab League and First Chairperson of the Executive Council for the Arab Organization at the Arab League.

Since her appointment to the Senate in 2003 and as the current Secretary General of the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), Al Maaytah has been working on important legislation to strengthen the status of women and to preserve the family structure in Jordan. An example of that is her advocacy work through NCFA for a draft law that will lead to the creation of family guidance and reconciliation units at Sharia courts. This will ultimately help to reduce the number of divorce cases and the subsequent negative impacts on family members.

Al Maaytah believes government and the legislature have an important duty to ensure the health of the nation. *“The health sector is in most countries predominantly a public sector and therefore influenced by public service reforms. Achievement and improvement in the health sector are crucially dependent on the performance of staff at all levels which, in turn, is intimately related to their general employment and working conditions.”*

She is a member of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee, as well as the Environmental, Health and Social Development Affairs Committee in the Senate.



# SENATOR

## INA'AM AL MUFTI

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Senator Ina'am Al Mufti brings a deep personal knowledge of women's struggles in Jordan to her role in the Senate. In 1979, Al Mufti became the first woman ever to hold a cabinet position when she was appointed as the Minister of Social Development. In addition to accomplishing this monumental feat for women, her career has been filled with broad experience and numerous achievements including the prestigious Kawkab Medal of Honor for her years of service to the country.

Al Mufti was born in Safad in 1929 and received a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the American University of Cairo (AUC). She worked as a teacher at the Teachers' Training Institute and with Radio Jordan in the late fifties. Al Mufti was the first woman to serve on the National Consultative Council, the body that replaced the elected Parliament between 1974 and 1984. She was an Advisor for Development and International Relations for Queen Nour Al Hussein, the Head of the Women's Training Institute in United Nations Reliefs and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the Head of the Department of Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Labor. She is a member of several organizations including the National Federation of Business and Professional Women (NFBPW), the International Women's Forum (IWF) and the AUC Alumni Club.

During her tenure in the Ministry of Labor, Al Mufti developed a plan to integrate women into the economic and social development branches of Jordanian life. Her work in this area includes influencing United Nations policy on the integration of women in society and politics at a United Nations meeting with the Women's Federation in Jordan and the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU). She also brought women's viewpoints into the spotlight serving as a Chair for the Realization of Peace in Women's Hands, a conference held in Geneva, Switzerland that discussed women's perspectives on achieving peace.

Al Mufti was appointed to the Jordanian Senate in 2003. She is a member of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee and the Environmental, Health and Social Development Affairs Committee.



# SENATOR

## WIJDAN AL TALHOUNI AL SAKET

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With experience owning and running her own antiques business, Senator Wijdan Al Talhouni Al Saket brings a unique perspective to her position. Though she ran for the Lower House in 2003 in Amman's competitive 3<sup>rd</sup> district and received over 1,200 votes, she was not elected and was subsequently appointed to the Jordanian Senate the same year. She serves as a member of the Finance and Economics Affairs Committee and the Administrative Affairs Committee of the Upper House.

*“One of the important, difficult problems is to convey the problem of women's issues and women in business and business in general to the legislature.”*

Al Saket also currently serves as the President of the Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women (JFBPW) and believes her work with the organization has been excellent preparation for her role in politics.

*“Our vision is to participate in Jordanian development in politics, social, and mostly also economic. We try to encourage women to be economically independent and also to encourage them to be decision-makers.”*

Born in 1939 in Amman, Al Saket received a Bachelor's degree in Politics and Economics from the Beirut College for Women. She then worked with the Central Bank of Jordan in the Economic Research and Studies Department and is honored to serve as a Representative of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women at the United Nations' Economic and Social Committee for Western Asia.

Al Saket is married and the proud mother of three children. She credits her family with her ability to dedicate so much of her life to politics. *“Because I was always a business woman I was working very hard all the time. I am one of those lucky women because I am really supported by my husband... by my children, by my brothers. But my mother is still skeptical, very skeptical.”*

Al Saket knows that despite already having a successful career, her work is just beginning. She asserts, *“My aspirations are great and I always look forward.”*



# SENATOR

## NAWAL FAOURI

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Senator Nawal Faouri is a leading Islamist and women's rights activist, as well as an outspoken advocate for women in government. She believes women's hope for progress lies with drafting modern laws that will enable all sectors of society, including women, to take part in the country's political life.

Appointed to the Senate in 2005, Faouri had been the first woman to be elected as a member of the Consultative Council for the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party in Jordan. She is currently a member of the political bureau of the moderate Al Wasat Islamic Party and has previously run for office for the elected Lower House.

Faouri's writings and research are globally known and she was one of four scholars to present at the first International Islamic Conference in Amman, Jordan in 2005. Her message focused on ways to increase women's political participation and she called on Muslim clerics to "*emphasize Islamic principles pertaining to women's issues... and pave the way for women to participate in the decision-making processes in their countries.*" She was also a member of the Arab Readers Group for the 2005 United Nations Arab Human Development Report.

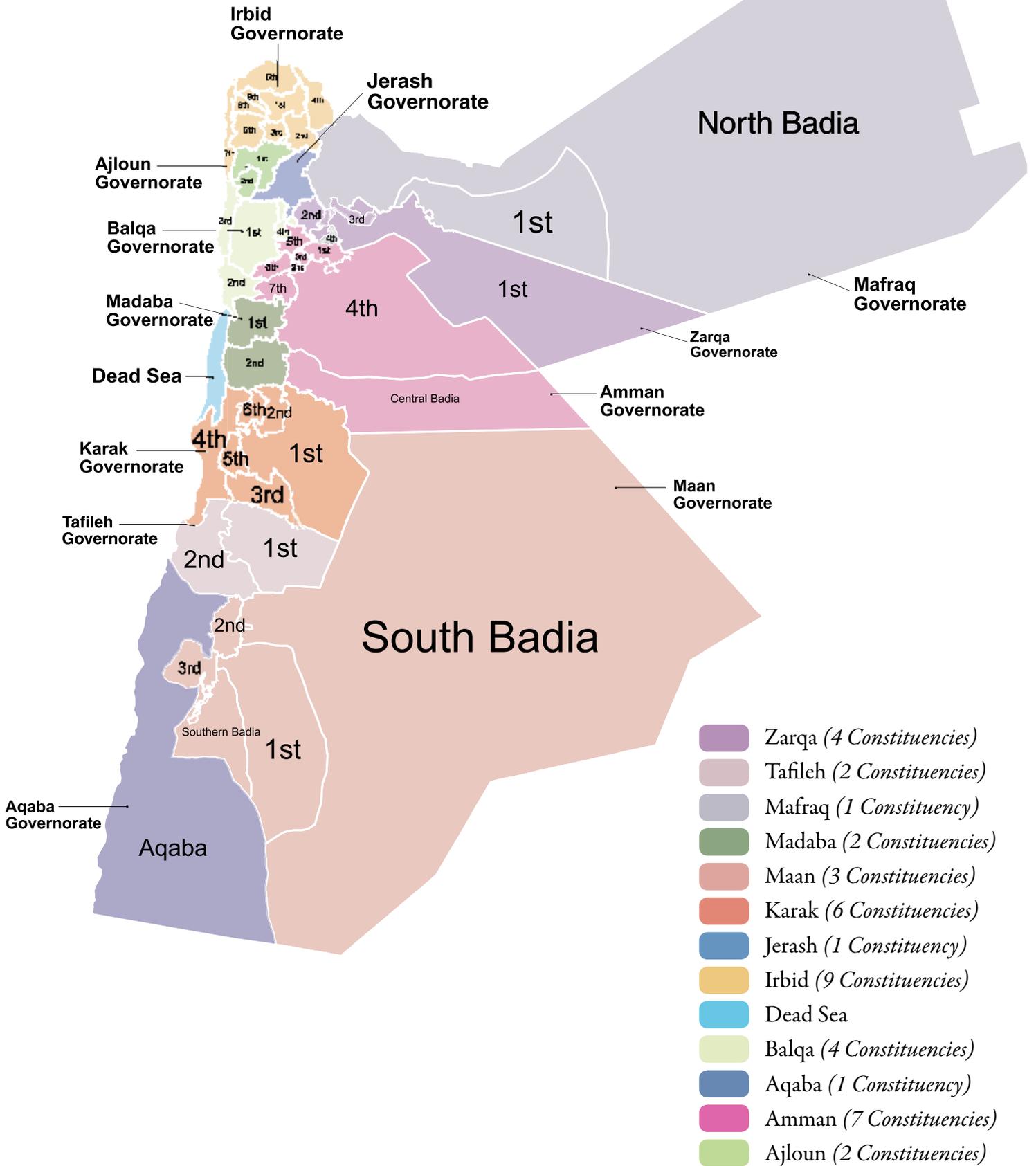
Faouri received her Doctorate in Education from the Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies. Her strong commitment to girls' education led her to set up her own school, the Ibn Taymaih, 40 kilometres outside Amman, aimed at educating a new generation of young women about their rights. She has served on several Royal Committees, contributing to formulating national policy through her work on the Jordan First and National Agenda initiatives. She also serves on the boards of many charity organizations, specifically those that direct their attention towards people with disabilities, women, children, the environment, development and education.

She has high expectations for women in the Jordanian Parliament and looks forward to increased support from the Jordanian government.

*"Women are looking forward to a clearer set of executive decisions made by the government, including media that adopts women causes in all fields. So far, we all have felt that none of the previous governments gave us the attention we deserve."*

Faouri is a member of the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW). She serves on the Environmental, Health and Social Development Affairs Committee, as well as the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee in the Senate.

# POLITICAL MAP OF JORDAN



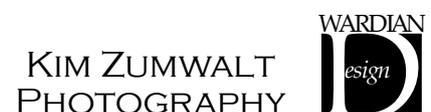
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2030 M Street, 5th Floor, NW  
Washington, DC 20036-3306  
Tel: (202) 728-5500  
Fax: (202) 728-5520  
[contactndi@ndi.org](mailto:contactndi@ndi.org)  
[www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org)

