



# Women's Political Participation in Africa 2021-2024

## NORTH Region

Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco,  
Sudan, Tunisia

## Fact Sheet

	Africa	Horn	East	Southern	Central	North	West
Lower houses of parliament 2024	26% (25%)	31% (33%)	34% (33%)	29% (28%)	22% (19%)	22% (24%)	20% (16%)
Upper houses of parliament 2024	21% (20%)	28% (30%)	34% (29%)	31% (29%)	28% (20%)	10% (11%)	7% (12%)
Parliament overall 2024	25% (24%)	30% (33%)	34% (32%)	29% (28%)	23% (19%)	20% (21%)	19% (16%)
Political party leadership 2024	9% (12%)	0% (17%)	11% (15%)	19% (14%)	0% (7%)	0% (0%)	0% (11%)
Election management bodies 2024	29% (28%)	30% (21%)	45% (45%)	37% (40%)	23% (20%)	15% (25%)	27% (24%)
Local government 2024	25% (21%)	29% (N/A)	24% (35%)	25% (20%)	24% (27%)	26% (3%)	28% (2%)
Speakers 2024	25% (21%)	0% (0%)	44% (33%)	43% (35%)	27% (18%)	0% (0%)	16% (16%)
Mayors of capital cities 2024	29% (19%)	25% (20%)	0% (0%)	20% (19%)	29% (43%)	17% (0%)	36% (20%)
Top executive positions 2024	13% (7%)	8% (10%)	28% (12%)	21% (9%)	11% (7%)	0% (0%)	7% (7%)
Cabinet 2024	24% (22%)	19% (17%)	36% (32%)	30% (26%)	18% (20%)	21% (13%)	21% (19%)

K	Increased since 2021 (in brackets)
E	Decreased since 2021 (in brackets)
Y	The same as 2021 (in brackets)

## QUICK FACTS

- There has been a one-percentage-point increase of women lower house parliamentarians in Africa since 2021, from 25% to 26%. At this rate of progress, we will reach parity by 2100.
- North Africa has a low representation of women in all areas of decision-making The region declined in four of the 10 areas measured, it remained the same in three areas and improved in three areas.
- In North Africa, 22% of lower house parliamentarians are women, a two-percentage-point decrease since 2021.
- Women in the lower houses of parliament in North Africa range from 31% in Sudan to 8% in Algeria.
- Only one country, Sudan, has achieved 30% of women in the lower house of parliament.
- Six countries in North Africa use some form of quota system at national, local or both levels.
- Women are best represented as mayors of capital cities, and least represented in political party leadership, and the top executive, where no women hold positions.
- Four countries in North Africa held national and/or local government elections between 2021 and 2024 - two increased and two declined.

# Context

North Africa is a large region in Africa, consisting of seven states. The region's political, human rights, and security situation is marked by a complicated interplay of authoritarian governance, ongoing conflicts, and significant human rights challenges. While some countries experience more stability than others, widespread repression and security threats remain critical issues in the region

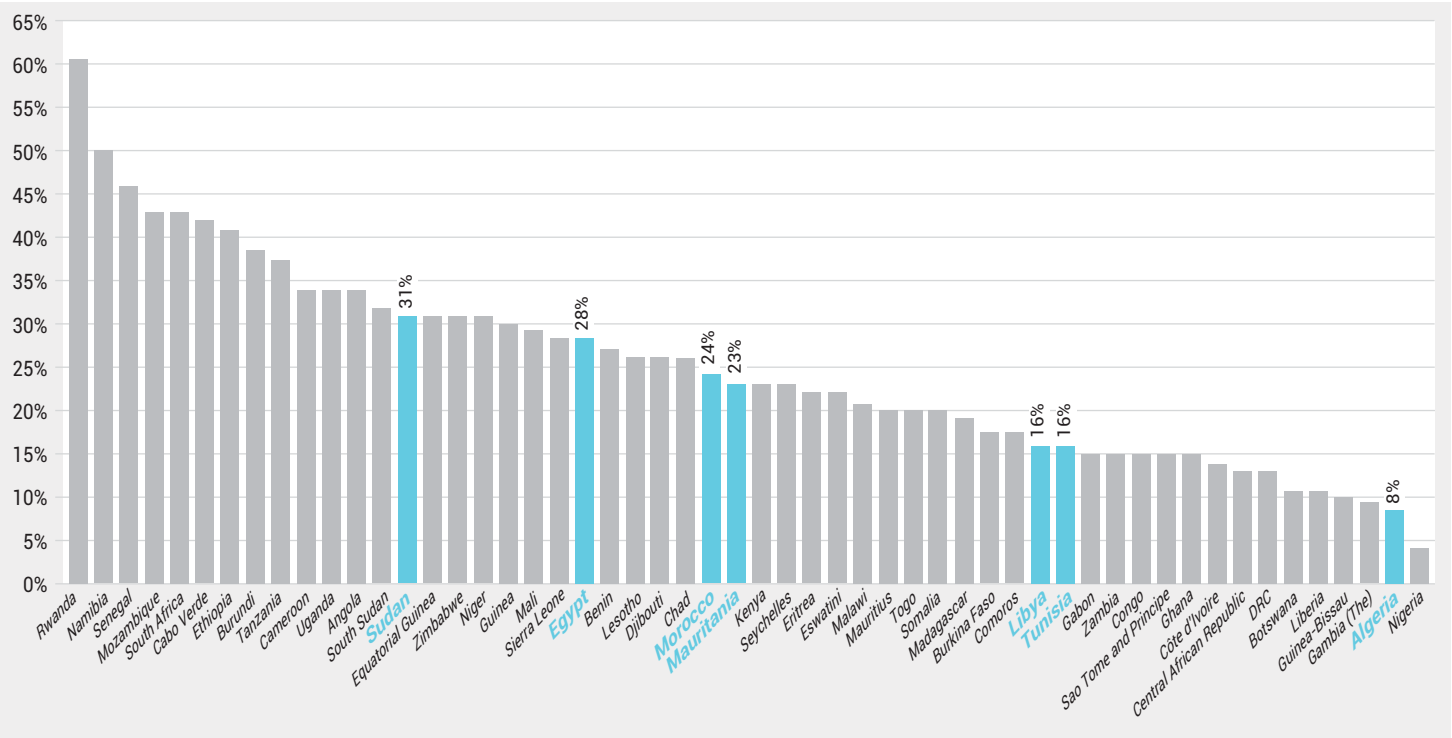
In **Algeria**, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has faced ongoing discontent regarding economic issues and a lack of political freedoms. In **Egypt**, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi government has been criticised for authoritarian practices, including suppressing opposition and limiting civil liberties. **Libya** remains mired in conflict and political instability, characterized by rival governments and ongoing confrontations between various militias. **Morocco** has a relatively more stable political situation, but it still grapples with issues of human rights and political dissent where the monarchy maintains significant power. **Tunisia** has faced a decline in democracy since the 2011 revolution, with President Kais Saied consolidating power following controversial elections and a series of political moves that undermined

parliamentary authority. Economic challenges and social discontent have led to widespread protests and calls for political reform. The political and human rights situation in **Mauritania** is complicated. There are leadership challenges, ongoing human rights abuses, and significant societal issues such as slavery and discrimination. Although there have been some positive steps towards reform and stability, both local and international communities need to keep working on these issues to promote democratic governance and protect human rights. **Sudan's** current political climate is marked by military control, severe human rights violations, and ongoing security challenges, leading to a humanitarian crisis that calls for urgent attention and action from both domestic and international actors.

These contexts directly impact women's rights in general and WPP in particular.

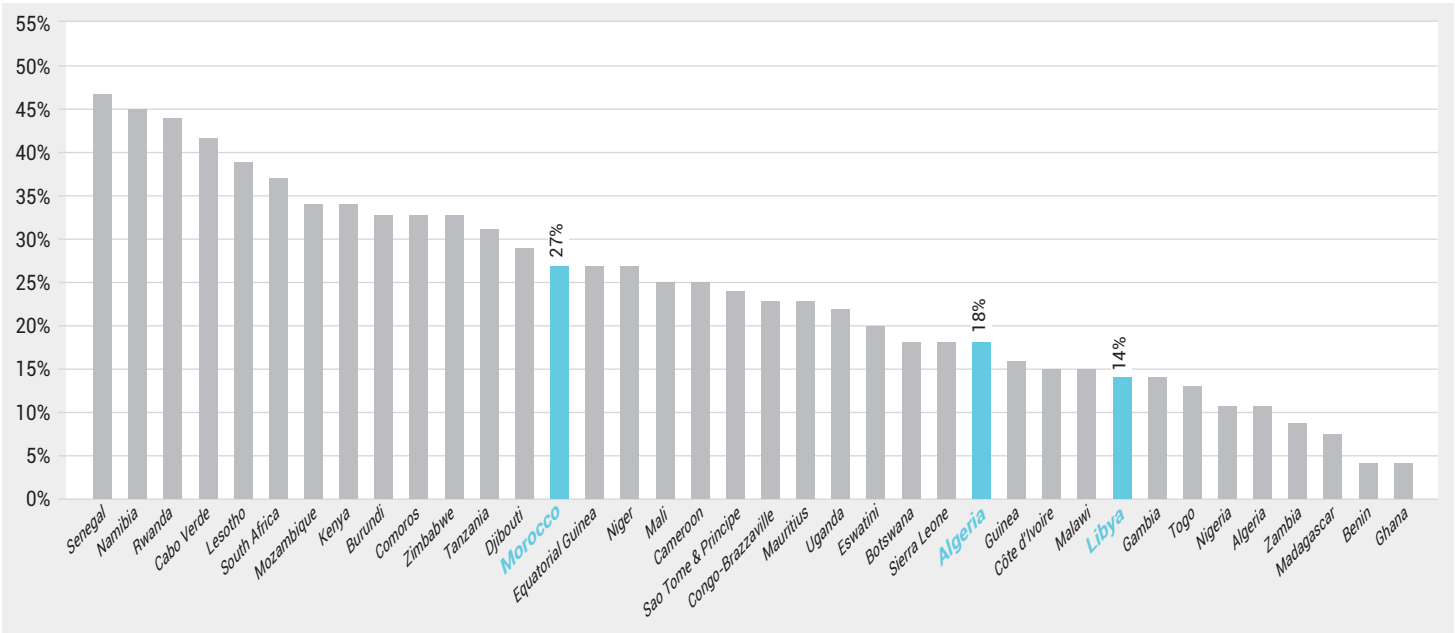
WPP in lower houses of parliament in Africa range from a high of 61% in Rwanda to a low of 4% in Nigeria. Sudan has the highest proportion of women in North Africa (31%), while Algeria (8%) has the lowest representation in North Africa.

WPP in Lower Houses in African countries, 2024



WPP at the local government level, in Africa ranges from 47% in Senegal to four percent in Benin and Ghana. There is only data for three countries in North Africa, where WPP ranges from 27% in Morocco to 14% in Libya.

WPP in local government by region



## Recent elections in North Africa (2021-2024)

Four countries in North Africa held national and/or local government elections between 2021 and 2024. The largest increase was in Morocco’s local elections, with a six percentage point increase. While the largest decline was in Algeria’s national election, where WPP decreased by 18 percentage points from 26% to 8%.

% Change	Lower House	Local Government
5% to 10%		Morocco (6%)
0 to 5%	Morocco (4%) Mauritania (3%)	Tunisia (0%) Algeria (0%)
-10% or lower	Tunisia (-10%) Algeria (-18%)	

## Obstacles to WPP

Progress has been made, however, research shows that women continue to face several barriers, not only in accessing political spaces but also in exercising their agency and power once elected.

### Electoral systems and quotas

Electoral systems and quotas (TSMs) have been shown to enhance WPP at all levels. The electoral system is the way in which representatives are elected, these systems.

In Africa, three main types of electoral systems are used:

- **Constituency** or “First Past the Post” (FPTP)/ plurality/majority systems - Winner takes all, generally yield poorer results for women and minority groups.
- **Proportional Representation (PR)** - Most conducive to increasing women’s representation, especially using the zebra list system.
- **Mixed** system using both PR and constituency systems - Middle ground, more countries moving to this system.

**Quotas** are temporary special measures (TSMs) to increase WPP. At the national level 45 of the 54 African states have some form of quota at the lower house level. At the local level of the 41 countries for which we could get data, 28 have some form of quota, with similar results to those in the lower house.

Any type of quota can be combined with any type of electoral system to increase women's political

representation, with varying degrees of success. It shows that the best combination for increasing WPP in Africa is the PR system where political parties provide for quotas voluntarily at the national level, while the mixed system with legislated candidate quotas is the most effective at the local government level. In the FPTP system voluntary party quotas are the least effective, while the most effective quota in the FPTP system is reserved seats for women.

Lower House					Local Government		
Country	Rank LH	Electoral system	Quota	%Women	Electoral system	Quota	%Women
Sudan		Mixed	Reserved seats	31%	N/A	N/A	No data
Egypt	81	PR	Reserved seats	28%	Mixed	Reserved seats	No data
Morocco	95	PR	Reserved seats	24%	N/A	Reserved seats	27%
Mauritania	98	Mixed	Legislated Candidate Quotas	23%	Mixed	Reserved seats	No data
Libya	138	Other	Legislated Candidate Quotas	16%	Mixed	Reserved seats	14%
Tunisia	140	PR	None	16%	PR	Legislated Candidate Quotas	No data
Algeria	168	PR	Legislated Candidate Quotas (changed	8%	FPTP	Reserved seats	18%
TOTAL CENTRAL				22%			23%

All six countries in North Africa use some form of quota system at the national, local, or both levels. At the national three countries use reserved seats and three legislated candidate quotas. At the local level, five countries use reserved seats, and one uses a legislated quota. The table shows that in North Africa, reserved seats in a PR or mixed electoral system yield the best results.



In **Algeria**, which has a PR system, women's political participation has generally been relatively high in the past due to a quota system reserving seats for women, which was implemented in 2012. This law led to a rapid increase in women parliamentarians immediately following its adoption. However, these numbers have been decreasing. In June 2020, Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune announced an amendment to the electoral law, replacing the reserved seat system with a legislated candidate quota system, requiring half of the candidates on party lists to be women. However, the new law includes a provision, Article 317, which allows party lists that do not meet the gender parity standard to still obtain parliamentary seats. This provision creates a loophole around the previous requirement for gender parity of candidates on the lists.

Additionally, the new law adopts an open list and direct elections system, which allows voters to choose their preferred candidate from among the lists. However, in a patriarchal society like Algeria, where there is resistance to women's participation in politics, this system disadvantages female candidates. In 2021, women's representation decreased by 18 percentage points from 26% to 8%.

**Libya** has not held national elections since 2014 and parliament is in a transitional status.

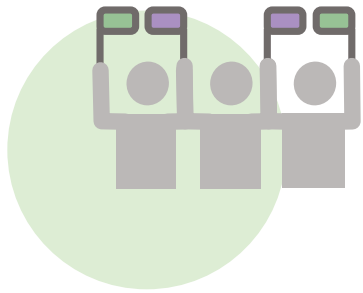


**South Sudan** has a 550-member Transitional National Legislative Assembly comprised appointed by the President and have not held local government elections.



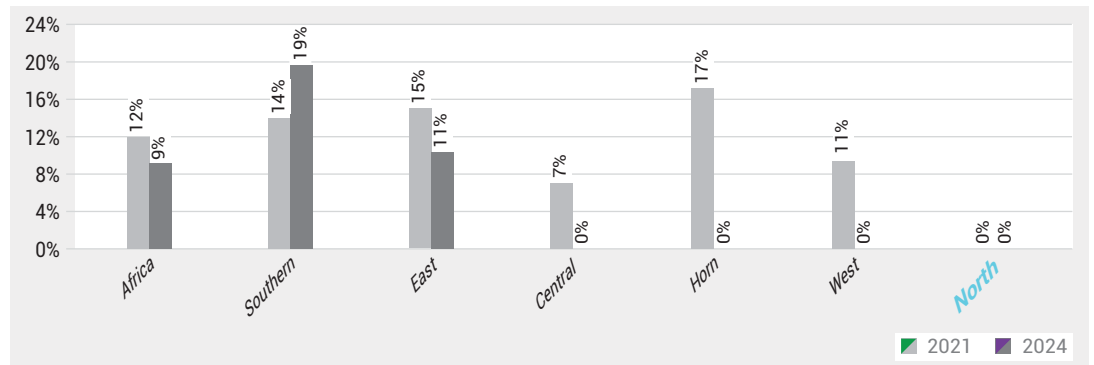
**Tunisia** has been in a period of transition since the Jasmine Revolution of 2011. However, the gains achieved since then are fragile, and the country is currently facing an economic and social crisis. Part of the rollback includes a new electoral law, introduced by the Tunisian President Kais Saied, in December 2022 that eliminates the parity regulation in the elected assemblies of the country. WPP dropped by ten percentage points from 26% to less than 16%.





## Political parties

Women's representation in political party leadership in Africa, by region, 2021-2024



Political parties are instrumental to advancement into national leadership, and male dominance of top leadership (Leader, Secretary General (SG) and DSG) is a feature in every country.

There are no women in the top leadership of the top two political parties in Central Africa.

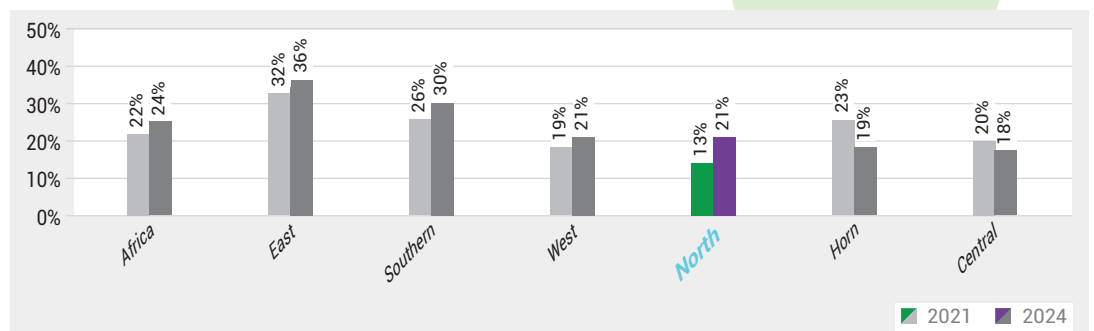


In Libya, there are legislated gender quotas, as well as attempts for inclusivity in different spheres of governance. These remain, however, in the control of political parties, that continue to exclude women. The political space in a patriarchal

system is still closed to women's involvement. Political change is in its infancy. It may take a while to bring women to leadership, particularly as executives of political formations agenda. Her contributions within the TAJ party ultimately led to her appointment as Minister of the Environment and Renewable Energy, a position she occupied from 2017-2020.

## Cabinet

Women in Cabinet in Africa, by region, 2021-2024



Overall Female Cabinet ministers increased by two percentage points to 24%. In North Africa 21% of Cabinet are women. Women ministers range from 35% in Tunisia to 15% in Algeria.



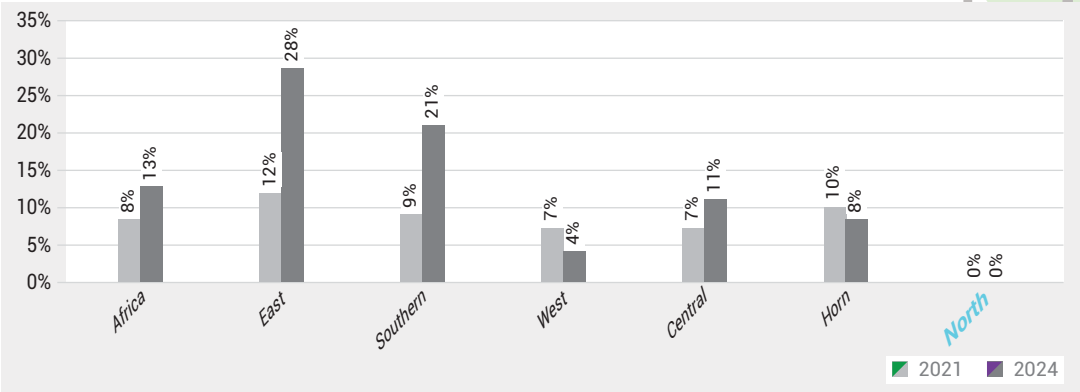
There are very few political parties. Fatma Zohra Zerouati is a prominent figure in Algerian politics and former Environment and Renewable Energy Minister. Zerouati's diverse background helped her understand societal and environmental issues, fostering collaborations nationally and internationally.

She co-founded the Tamajoue Amal El Djazair (TAJ) party in 2012, which she leads<sup>1</sup>. As a member of the party's Politburo, Zerouati spearheaded environmental initiatives, such as incorporating sustainable development into the party's agenda and organising related activities.

<sup>1</sup> This party is not included in the figures as it is a minority party and the study only assessed the ruling and the main opposition party.

# Top Executive

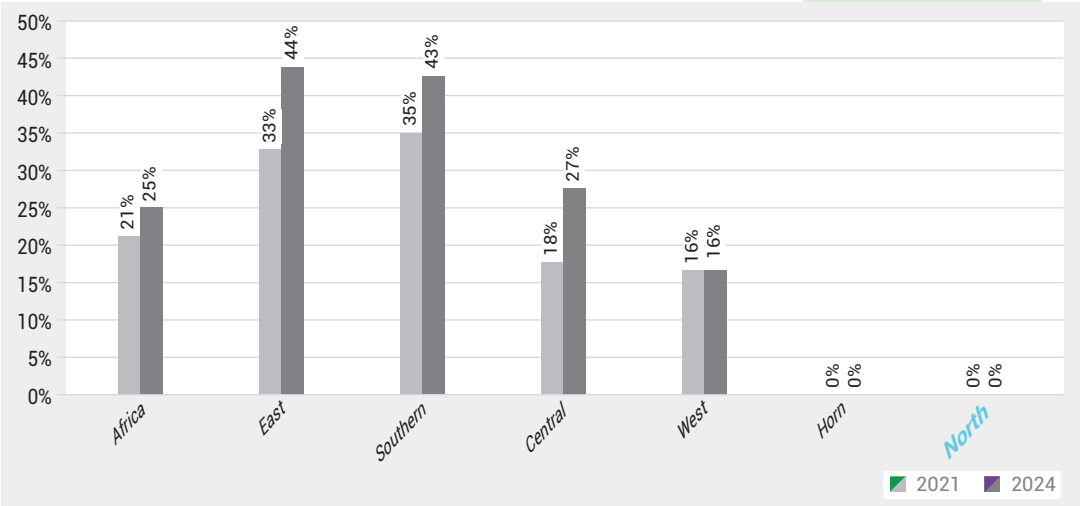
Women in top executive of governments in Africa, by region, 2021-2024



There are no women in the top executive in North Africa.

# Speakers

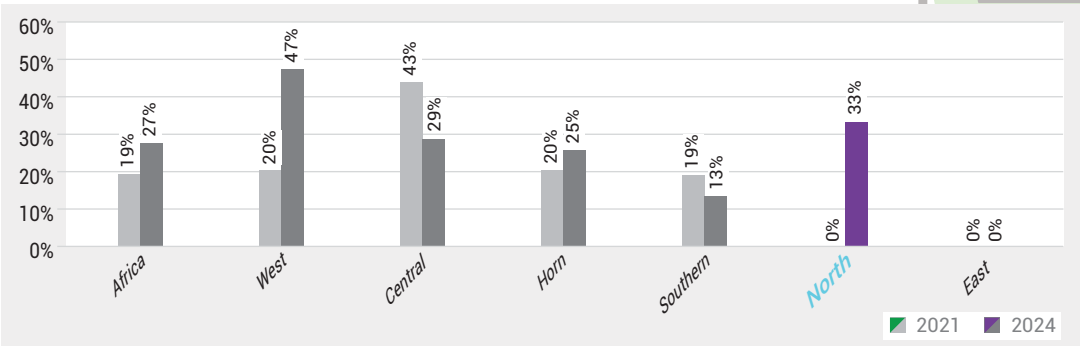
Women speakers in Africa, by region, 2021-2024



There are no women speakers in North Africa.

# Mayors of capital cities

Women mayors of capital cities in Africa, by region, 2021-2024

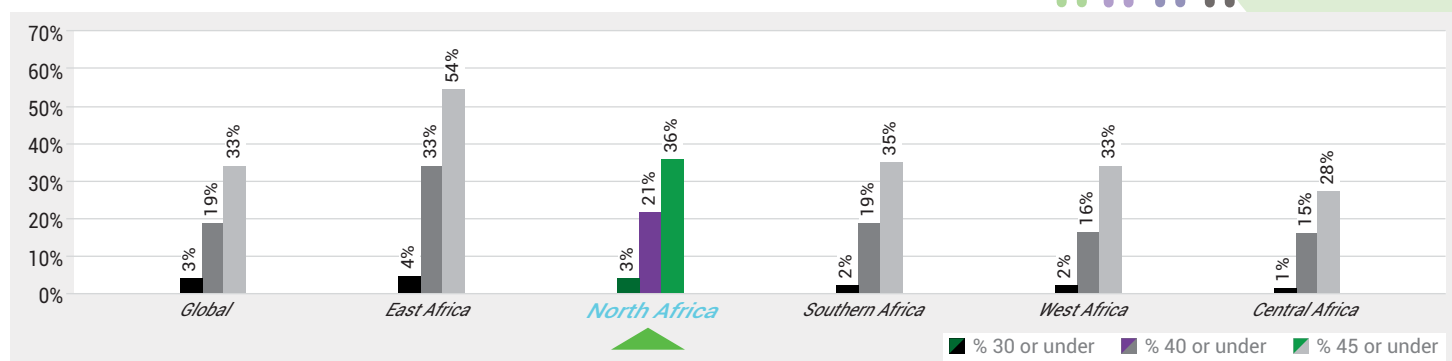


This is the area of political decision-making where North Africa performs best. There are two female mayors of six capital cities in North Africa. Morocco, Rabat, Faitha El Moudni and Souad Abderrahim the first female mayor of Tunis, Tunisia.

# Youth representation



Youth representation in parliament in Africa by region



Globally, 33% of MPs in the lower houses of parliament are under 45 years old, 19% under 40 years old, and just 3% under 30. In North Africa, 36% are 45 years or under, 19% are 40 or under and just 3% are 30 years or younger.

## Representation by age bracket

Country	Chamber	% 30 or under	% 40 or under	% 45 or under
Algeria	National People's Assembly	4	31	46
Egypt	House of Representatives	2	21	33
Libya	House of Representatives	0	14	29
Morocco	House of Representatives	5	17	28
Tunisia	People's Representatives Assembly	5	22	44

**Algeria** has the highest proportion of MPs under 40 and 45 years. **Morocco** and **Tunisia** have the highest proportion of MPs 30 years or younger.



**Morocco** has legislated gender quotas; Moroccan legislation encourages women and young people to run for legislative office by establishing national lists for 90 of the 395 seats in the Assembly of Representatives. For these 90 seats, there is a national list for young candidates under 40

years of age for 30 seats and a list of women candidates for 60 seats. While political parties originally fielded only men in constituencies reserved for youth, they have since opened for women. Since women were in the past not active in political party structures, the introduction of gender quotas and reserved seats led to an unprecedented demand for women candidates. Political parties became proactive in recruiting and investing in women in order to fill the candidate lists.

All graphs, tables and information are sourced from the second edition of the WPP Africa Barometer, read the full version [here](#).