



**The BBC has revealed its list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world for 2021.**

**This year 100 Women is highlighting those who are hitting 'reset'.**

Women from Afghanistan make up half of this year's list, some of whom appear under pseudonyms and without photos for their own safety. The resurgence of the Taliban in August 2021 has changed the lives of millions of Afghans - with girls banned from receiving secondary education, the ministry for women's affairs being disbanded, and women in many cases told not to return to work. This year's list recognises the scope of their bravery and their achievements as they are forced to reset their lives.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-59514598>

## **How were the 100 Women chosen?**

The BBC's 100 Women team drew up a shortlist based on names gathered by them and suggested by the BBC's network of World Service languages teams. They were looking for candidates who had made the headlines or influenced important stories over the past 12 months, as well as those who have inspiring stories to tell, achieved something significant or influenced their societies in ways that wouldn't necessarily make the news. The pool of names was then assessed against this year's theme - women who are hitting 'reset', playing their part to reinvent our world after the global pandemic has forced so many of us to reassess the way we live.

This year BBC 100 Women made the unprecedented decision to devote half of the list to women from one country - Afghanistan. Recent events in the country have made headlines and left millions of Afghans questioning their future, as rights groups have spoken up in fear that women's freedoms could be eroded for the foreseeable future under the Taliban. By dedicating half of the list to women who are from or work in the country, we wanted to highlight how many of them have been forced to disappear from areas of public life, as well as to share the voices of those who are being increasingly silenced or who are part of a new Afghan diaspora.

Six of the 100 women were from the UK. Here are their stories:



## Natasha Asghar

She made history this year when she became the first woman of colour to be elected to the Senedd or Welsh Parliament since it was formed, in 1999.

A member of the Conservative party and regional member of parliament for South Wales East, Natasha Asghar is shadow minister for transport and technology. She hopes to launch a travel card which would encourage locals and tourists in Wales to use public transport and fuel economic growth.

Before joining politics, she worked as a banker, TV presenter and radio DJ, and she has written two books.



## Jos Boys

Co-director of The Dis-ordinary Architecture Project, which encourages innovation among disabled artists relating to access and inclusion in the design of our built surroundings.

Combining her work as an architect with her activism, Jos Boys co-founded the Matrix Feminist Design Collective in the 1980s and is one of the authors of *Making Space: Women and the Man-Made Environment*. She has worked as an academic in many international institutions, exploring feminist spatial practices to creatively challenge assumptions in architectural design.

In a career spanning 40 years, she has raised awareness of how our everyday social and material practices can be used to support people with disabilities.



## Najla Elmangoush

Libya's first female foreign minister, appointed this year, is also a diplomat and lawyer. During the Libyan Revolution in 2011, Najla Elmangoush was part of the National Transitional Council, and worked on building links with civil society organisations.

She was Libya's representative at the United States Institute of Peace and has worked on peace-building and law programmes at the Centre for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution. Political infighting in her country has put pressure on her career and she has recently been barred from travelling.

She has a law degree from Benghazi University and a PhD in conflict analysis and resolution from George Mason University, in the US.



# Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

A Scottish barrister known for defending the rights of women and minorities, Baroness Helena Kennedy QC has practised criminal law for 40 years. She is director of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, which has recently been assisting women at risk in Afghanistan.

She was principal of Mansfield College at the University of Oxford for several years and was responsible for creating the ground-breaking Bonavero Institute of Human Rights there.

Baroness Kennedy has published various books on the justice system's impact on women and in 1997 she was made a Labour peer in the House of Lords.



## Soma Sara

Viral Instagram account and website Everyone's Invited, a platform for survivors of sexual abuse, was founded by Soma Sara in June 2020. It provides scope for victims to share testimonies of sexual assault anonymously, to condemn sexism and help eradicate "rape culture" in UK schools and universities.

The project has collected more than 50,000 stories since it began, gaining prominence after the murder of Sarah Everard, who was kidnapped from a London street in March 2021.

Sara hopes to expand her campaign beyond academic institutions, to target misogyny, too.



## Mina Smallman

She became the first female Church of England archdeacon from a black or ethnic-minority background in 2013. Now a retired Anglican priest and schoolteacher, Mina Smallman has been campaigning to make UK streets safer and to reform the police.

Two of her daughters were murdered in 2020: Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry were stabbed to death by a 19-year-old man in a London park. Smallman criticised the police's handling of the initial missing-persons call and said her two girls might have been victims of 'racial profiling' and 'classism'.

She says she has forgiven her daughters' killer: 'When we hold hatred for someone, it's not only them who are held captive, it's you, because your thoughts become consumed by revenge. I refuse to give him that power.'