Canadian Muslim MPs Make History

OnIslam & News Agencies
Wednesday, 21 October 2015 00:00

TORONTO – In an unprecedented victory for the Canadian Muslim community, many Muslims emerged victorious in the latest country’s 2015 general elections, defying prejudice and stereotype faced by the religious minority in Canada.

At least 10 Muslim candidates, including four women, won this week’s election that is expected to spell a sea-change in Canadian politics, following the sweeping victory of Liberals, according to Muslim Link.

The Liberals were elected in 185 districts, with Justin Trudeau winning his Montreal district. The party needed 170 to gain a majority.

The Conservatives were next with 97, followed by the New Democrats at 28 and Bloc Quebecois with nine.

Maryam Monsef

Monsef, an Afghan Canadian, became the first female MP in the history of Peterborough, after defeating Conservative candidate Michael Skinner and NDP candidate Dave Nickle.

The 30-year-old MP co-founded the Red Pashmina Campaign that raised over $150,000 for women and girls in Afghanistan. She is also the co-recipient of the Peterborough YMCA’s Peace Medallion.

"Today isn't the end, it's actually the beginning. The beginning of a lot of hard work to meet the commitments I made," she said in her victory speech to constituents at Showplace Peterborough, PTBO Canada reported.

The Trent University graduate became the youngest-ever MP.

Ahmed Hussein
The National President of the Canadian Somali Congress was elected for the Liberals in York South-Weston, becoming the first Somali Canadian MP.

Hussein, who earned his B.A (History) from York University and his Law Degree from the University of Ottawa, was recognized in 2014 by Toronto Star as one of ten individuals who have made substantial contributions to the community.

The Somali-born lawyer and activist also emerged as a powerful community leader after co-founding the Regent Park Community Council in 2002, as well as sourcing $500 million revitalization project of Regent Park.

**Omar Alghabra**

The mechanical engineer MBA graduate was elected for the Liberals in Mississauga Centre.

Serving as the Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Erindale from 2006 to 2008, Alghabra offered his constituents a strong voice on both local and national issues like the Liberal Critic for Natural Resources, as well as Citizenship and Immigration.

Currently, the Muslim MP is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science at Ryerson University.

**Iqra Khalid**

The Liberal MP won a hard-fought battle to unseat Conservative incumbent Bob Dechert in Mississauga-Erindale riding, considered a stronghold for the Conservatives.

Khalid, a young Pakistani-Canadian woman, graduated from York University in 2007, with a double major in Criminology and Professional Writing.

The legal professional with the City of Mississauga has held numerous volunteer positions including President of the Pakistani Student Association, Media Relations Ambassador for the York University Student Alumni, Communication Coordinator for the Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals, and a Director on the Board for Breaking Free Foundation.

**Majid Jawhari**

The Muslim businessman was elected for the Liberals in Richmond Hill, becoming the country’s first Iranian Canadian MP.

Jawhari holds a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from Ryerson University, and an MBA from York University’s Schulich School of Business.

The Liberal MP is actively involved in the local community, serving as a member in the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, the Iranian Canadian Network, the Iranian Canadian Congress, Parya Trillium, and Mohandes.
Yasmin Ratansi

Ratansi, who served Don Valley East in the House of Commons from 2004 to 2011, was elected for the Liberals in the same riding.

Being an MP for Don Valley East, she served in the House of Commons as Chair of Government Operations, Chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and Deputy Whip and Vice Chair of Procedures and House Affairs.

The Vice Chair of GOPAC (Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption) served as Board Member of CAMH, Chairperson AIB and International consultant in the areas of Gender Budgeting, Governance, Transparency and Accountability.

Arif Virani

The Muslim rights activist was elected for the Liberal in Parkdale-High Park.

Being fluent in English, French, and Hindi, Arif has worked as an analyst with the Canadian Human Rights Commission in Ottawa, an investigator at la Commission des droits de la personne et droits de la jeunesse in Montreal, and as an Assistant Trial Attorney prosecuting genocide at the UN’s International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Coming to Canada as Ugandan Asian refugee, Arif earned an Honors BA in History and Political Science from McGill University, and completed his LL.B at the University of Toronto.

Salma Zahid

The recipient of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal was elected for the Liberals in Scarborough Centre.

Zahid, a Pakistani-Canadian mother of two, is senior advisor to the Government of Ontario in numerous portfolios ranging from Health and Long Term Care, Infrastructure, Citizenship and Immigration, and Tourism to Culture and Sports.

The mother of two holds a Masters in Educational Management and Administration from the University of London’s Institute of Education, and an MBA from Quaid e Azam University in Pakistan.

"Scarborough families tonight voted for real change," she said as dozens gathered to celebrate her victory, ARY news reported.

"I will work hard to deliver the results they deserve."

Ali Ehsassi

Ehsassi, an active member of the Liberal Party for several decades, was elected for the Liberals in Willowdale.

Holding a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto and a Master’s of Science from the London School of Economics, Ehsassi is a lawyer by trade.

He also obtained his LL.B. from Osgoode Hall Law School, and his LL.M. at Georgetown University Law Center.

Marwan Tabbara,
The Lebanese Canadian politician was elected for the Liberal in Kitchener South Hespeler.

The Liberal party volunteer earned a Political Science degree from the University of Guelph.

Tabbara currently holds two jobs, a field supervisor for Q2 management and supervising production operations of Pepsico food manufacturing facility.