

SAYEEDA WARSI

Britain's First Muslim Government Minister

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Topics

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Baroness Sayeeda Warsi is a lawyer, author, business woman and member of the House of Lords. She was Britain's first Muslim Cabinet Minister; Chairman of the Conservative party 2010-12 and a Minister at the Foreign Office 2010-14. Daughter of an immigrant mill worker, Warsi rose to become an Advisor to the Leader of the Conservative Party, Michael Howard, in 2004, the youngest peer in the House of Lords, aged 36, in 2007 and Britain's first Muslim Cabinet Minister in 2010. A campaigner on equalities and religious freedom in 2007 she travelled to Sudan and famously helped to secure the release of the British teacher Gillian Gibbons who was on trial for blasphemy. The iconic images of her in 2010 on the steps of No 10 Downing Street in a shalwar kameez (a traditional ethnic outfit) were beamed around the world as she was appointed as Chairman of the Conservative Party – the first Asian to chair a major British political party.

In 2012, Warsi was made Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Minister for Faith and Communities. Warsi has been a major driver of five start-up businesses; three in the service sector and two in manufacturing, all of which have developed into vibrant and successful SMEs. In Government she led the campaign to ensure that Britain became the first western country to issue a Sukuk (Islamic bond), which was issued in 2014.

Sayeeda has been involved in several business, including managing her family business (textiles), family / succession planning of a business. She is currently an angel investor in a tech-start up which Microsoft are interested in acquiring. Running a successful food manufacturing enterprise with her husband, Sayeeda operates one of the UK's largest food processing manufacturers. Their company supplies various products, including vegetarian and vegan fillings, to notable brands like McCain and Greggs, amongst others.

She also Chaired the Global Islamic Finance & Investment Group. She is a trustee for Yorkshire Sculpture Park, an International Advisor to Australia Catholic University, a Visiting Professor at St Marys – the oldest Catholic university in the UK, an Advisor to Georgetown University, Washington D.C, a member of International Advisory Board on FORB, University of Notre Dame and Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of Bolton.

She has also been awarded Honorary Doctorates from Aston, Birmingham City, and Bolton universities, as well as from the University of Law. Sayeeda is a regular TV commentator and documentary maker. She recently tried her hand at Stand Up in aid of Cancer research, where she was voted the winner of the series in February 2021. In 2022, she hosted a reality TV show with Alastair Campbell called 'Make Me Prime Minister'. Currently, Sayeeda presents on a daytime television show in the UK twice a week.

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