



**RAVZA KAVAKCI KAN**  
**MEMBER OF THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE TURKISH IPU GROUP**



**CANDIDATE FOR THE BUREAU OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

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I, in the capacity of the President of Turkish IPU Group, have a great pleasure to share with you my candidacy to the vacant position for the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians.

In our present world, it is vital to give women equal rights with men such as access to science, technology, and all spheres of social life including participation in politics. Ending all discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right but it is crucial for sustainable future. It is proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development.

I would like to share with great honor that in Republic of Turkey, before women in many other countries, women obtained the right to be elected on an equal basis with men in the local elections in 1930, and in the parliamentary elections in 1934. This year is the 85th Anniversary of Granting Turkish Women the Right to Elect and Be Elected. Unfortunately, due to the discriminatory policies of previous governments women who wear the headscarf were prevented from being elected to office for decades. The anniversary of granting Turkish women the right to elect and be elected provides us with an opportunity to see the progress achieved in women's rights and to see the points reached. The discrimination against the women who wear the headscarf came to an end after the democratization process in 2013 and they were able exercise their right to get elected with the elections of 2015.

In this context, I worked as a human rights activist for many years before serving as a member of parliament. I worked especially towards the lifting of the

headscarf ban in Turkey, which existed in form of state policy that discriminated against women who wore the headscarf.

During my tenure in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, I tried to do my best to play a significant part in the development of women's rights in my country and for this purpose, I participated in numerous panels, seminars, workshops and meetings both as a speaker and as a moderator and shared my thoughts on this issue with millions.

I took part in the International Women and Justice Summit that took place in Istanbul, Turkey in November 2014. I was a moderator in a number of panels. I was a special guest at the International Interdisciplinary Women's Studies Conference Hosted by Sakarya University and Civil Society in December 2015. I also was a part of the civil society project titled "Women in Innovation Entrepreneurship Camp" run by KADEM (Women and Democracy Association) and TÜBİTAK-MARTEK. I also took part in numerous humanitarian aid projects designed especially to assist women migrants. Women and children constitute a majority of the 4.5 million Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey.

I was the co-editor of the first issue KADEM Journal of Women's Studies June- December 2015 term (ISSN 2149-4878).

I was an invited speaker at the High-Level Round Table titled "Digitalization: Policies for a Digital Future" organized by the Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) and Women 20 in Düsseldorf, Germany in April 2017. I took part in the Women in Parliaments Global Forum, OECD - WIP Summit in Amman, Jordan in May 2016 in co-operation with the House of Representatives of Jordan hosted the WIP Global Summit.

I was a keynote speaker at the Women's Forum in Mauritius in June 2016 titled "Meeting the climate challenge for SIDS and Africa" hosted by the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society. I spoke at the session titled "A planet where our children can still live: The essential role of politicians".

I was a contributor to the sessions of the Sub-Committee on Leading the Youth, Primarily Girls towards Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) established in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in November 2018.

I attended in the Civil Society Training Programs for Palestinian Women Political Leaders in February 2020 and Somalian Women Politicians in February 2019. I was a speaker and participant at the Women in Politics Workshops organized by the IPU, UN Women and Women and Men Equal Opportunity Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey that took place in Istanbul in November 2019 and Mardin in December 2018. I also delivered speech as a keynote speaker at the Women Parliamentarians Forum of the 11th Plenary Session of Asian Parliamentary Assembly titled "STEM education" in 2018 in İstanbul.

I took part in the 63rd Session of UN Commission on the Status of Women Event titled "Investing in Gender Equality: Parliaments ensuring social Protection, Public Services and Infrastructure Deliver for Women and Girls" hosted by the IPU and UN Women in New York in March 2019.

Presenting my credential for the vacant position, I would like to contribute regarding the Turkish experience on addressing gender inequality and strengthen the ties and cooperation with my respected colleagues from different countries to learn their experiences within the scope of strengthening women's economic and social status, preventing violence against women and protecting women's human rights. I do hope your robust and candid support will give me the opportunity to work for that purpose.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ravza" in a cursive style, followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ravza KAVAKCI KAN, Ph.D.

President of the Turkish IPU Group

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Ravza KAVAKCI KAN holds a Ph.D. in political science from Howard University in Washington, DC (2013). She has an MA (2008) degree in European Studies from Boğaziçi University and a BS (1993) degree in Software Engineering from University of Texas at Dallas.

After completing her undergraduate degree, she worked in Belbim A.Ş and at the Project Department of Istanbul Ulaşım Company and lectured at Hasan Kalyoncu University. She was a member of advisory board of Center for Postcolonial Studies.

Dr. KAVAKCI KAN was elected as a Member of Parliament of Istanbul from AK Party for the 25<sup>th</sup> legislative term of Grand National Assembly of Turkey. She was re-elected for the 26<sup>th</sup> term on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 and the 27<sup>th</sup> term on June 24<sup>th</sup> 2018, respectively. She served as the Vice-Chair of AK Party in charge of Human Rights and was a member of the Central Decision and Executive Board of AK Party for three terms between 2015 and 2018.

She was the Head of Turkey-China Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group and President of the Round Table for Parliamentarians of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. She served as a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on EU Harmonization in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. She has been elected as the President of the Turkish Inter-Parliamentary Union Group for the 27<sup>th</sup> legislative term of Grand National Assembly of Turkey and is a member of the Committee on Digital Platforms that is newly established.

She has an excellent command of English. She is married with a daughter.