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8.4.3. Announced reforms and their implementation

On 17 October 2024, the interim government announced the creation of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission,1008 which was officially formed on 18 November 2024.1009 The Commission comprises 10 women members1010 with a renowned feminist activist and a founder of the women's rights group Naripokkho, Shireen Huq, as its head.1011

On 19 April 2025, the Women's Affairs Reform Commission submitted its report to Yunus and proposed a number of reforms to 'eliminate all forms of discrimination against women embedded in the country's laws, constitution, policies, and institutions'.1012 The reform proposals included, inter alia, constitutional amendments, the introduction of a Uniform Family Code in place of religion-based personal laws, the establishment of a permanent National Women's Commission, the expansion of the Parliament to 600 seats with half of the seats to be filled by directly elected women, a gender zipper system,1013 and guarantees for equal pay, property rights, and health access.1014 Following the release of the Commission's report, in April 2025, Hefazat-e-Islam, a platform of Islamist religious parties, and Jamaat-i-Islami, the largest religious political party, demanded the abolition of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission.1015

In March 2025, Yunus announced initiatives carried out by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to 'increase women's participation in all fields, including economic development'. The initiatives include, inter alia, 'shelter homes for distressed women, Women's Support Centers providing legal aid, housing for working women, and microcredit programs designed to foster self-employment and financial independence', as reported by local media.1016 In April 2025, the interim government under the social welfare ministry announced an increase in the allowance for widows and women abandoned by their husbands. The number of beneficiaries will be increased from 2.78 million individuals to 2.9 million and the monthly allowance amount will be raised from 550 taka to 650 taka [about EUR 3.80 to EUR 4.50].1017 Further updated information on the implementation of the reforms, including effectiveness, could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints for this report.

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  PHM, Long time PHM activist Shireen Huq is to lead Bangladesh’s Women's Affairs Commission, 25 October 2024, url

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  Daily Star (The), Eliminate gender disparities in laws, 20 April 2025, url

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  A ’zipper system’ aims to ensure gender parity, by alternating male and female candidates on party lists. See: European Parliament, Different Impact of Electoral Systems on Female Political Representation, 1997, url

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  Dhaka Tribune, Women Affairs Reform Commission takes aim at constitution, personal laws governed by religion, 19 April 2025, url

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  Business Standard (The), Women's Affairs Reform Commission's recommendations are a planned attack on Islam, Muslim identity: Golam Parwar, 20 April 2025, url; Dawn, Religious parties seek abolition of Bangladesh women’s commission, 22 April 2025, url

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  Dhaka Tribune, CA Yunus honours outstanding women with ‘Indomitable Women’s Award 2025’, 8 March 2025, url

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  Prothom Alo, Allowances for elderly, widow, disabled and underprivileged communities to increase by Tk 50 to 150, 21 April 2025, url

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