

MEDIA RELEASE

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A world of iconic women, all linked to one small island

Almost 50 flags from the Bailiwick, the UK and around the world have been added to an online map of Guernsey to celebrate the contribution of women in public life for International Women's Day (8 March).

Each flag represents an iconic woman from that country or island, nominated by a Guernsey resident who was born there. Clicking on the flag brings up information about the woman and the name of her nominator, others who were nominated (a further 37 women in all), and any relevant local cultural organisation.

There are many firsts in the map. The first women to lead their country: Julia Gillard in Australia, Angela Merkel in Germany, Mary Robinson in Ireland, Vaira Vike Freiberga in Latvia, Dalia Grybauskaite in Lithuania, Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand, Zuzana Čaputová in Slovakia. And the first female president of the European Parliament in Simone Veil of France. All bringing a new and different perspective to the role.

The first women to break through in their professions, including Valentina Tereshkova from Russia, the first woman astronaut; Maria Teresa Ruiz, the first woman president of the Chilean Academy of Sciences; Dr Padmavathy Bandopadhyay, India's first female Air Marshal; and England's Baroness Hale, the first female president of the UK Supreme Court.

And the first to lead global organisations, such as Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the first woman and the first African to be appointed as Director General at the World Trade Organisation.

The map also gives official data on the percentage of women in the national parliament of that country, ranging from New Zealand, in fourth position globally with 48.3%, to Lebanon, in 183rd position with 5.6%.

There is one surprise flag on the map. A special rainbow #GuernseyTogether flag highlights Dr Nicola Brink, recognising the number of nominations she received and the iconic status she has achieved in her adopted home of Guernsey for her expert guidance through the pandemic.

more follows

Women in Public Life committee member Linda Rolf says, 'The theme of International Women's Day is #ChoosetoChallenge. We put our map challenge out there to celebrate all the people of different nationalities who live in the Bailiwick and highlight the achievements of women in public life around the world. The response has been overwhelming, heart-warming and very educational.

'The women featured in our map have achieved incredible things, often overcoming significant barriers to make an important and lasting contribution to their countries.

'We hope that our campaign has planted the seeds to inspire a more diverse and representative range of women to stand for public office in Guernsey. Because, as we all know, balanced teams make better decisions.

'We could not have filled the map without the three local women who inspired and supported our campaign. A huge thank you to Evita Bormane from Latvia, Cathy Wanyoike from Kenya and Maria-Jose (Joey) Freeman from Chile. And to Deputy Sasha Kazantseva-Miller, who was born in Russia, for her support.'

Joey Freeman, who established Pilates Core Club in Guernsey, and is a scientist by profession says, 'It has been inspiring to be part of this campaign and I hope it will encourage more international women to gain confidence and get involved with the community. Women in Public Life is there to support you along the way.

'In my academic career, I have always worked with international colleagues, both men and women, and I found that the different perspectives, cultures and values were hugely valuable to achieving successful outcomes in our work.'

To view the completed map of iconic women, go to www.womeninpubliclife.gg.

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Editor's notes:

1. The total number of flags on the Guernsey map will be 49 on 8 March (38 as at 6 March, with the rest due to go live by Monday).
2. More than one in three people who live in Guernsey were born outside the island. Most of them are UK-born but a third - 11% of the total population - were born elsewhere.
3. Media contact for International Women's Day campaign for Women in Public Life: Linda Rolf linda@lindarolfassociates.com 07781 166892.
4. Women in Public Life inspires and supports the women of Guernsey to stand for public office. www.womeninpubliclife.gg. We are a support network for women, run by volunteers. We are not a political party or an association. Examples of the roles described on womeninpubliclife.gg are Deputy, Douzenier/Constable, Jurat of the Royal Court, Business Adviser to a States Trading Asset, Non-States Member on a States Committee, Planning Panel.