

Zeinab Badawi



Zeinab was born in the Sudan but moved to London at the age of two. Her father Mohammed-Khair El Badawi – was involved in pre-independence politics in Sudan. Her great-grandfather Babikir Bedri, was the pioneer of education for girls and women in Sudan. Today the family still run Al Ahfad University - an all women's university in the capital, which educates females from all parts of Sudan and the rest of Africa.

Zeinab: "When I was growing up it was not uncommon for me to meet aunts and great-aunts who had PHD's from some of the world's top universities. My grandmother – who would be more than a hundred years old today - could read and write. So I have never understood why anyone would object to female education on any grounds."

Zeinab herself went to school in London, taking A'levels in Russian, Latin and History before going to St Hilda's College, Oxford University, to study for a BA Hons in Philosophy, Politics and Economics - 1978-81.

She also studied for a post-graduate degree in History and Anthropology of the Middle East at the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University SOAS in 1989, for which she was awarded a distinction.

Zeinab has extensive experience in television and radio, working on a range of programmes, in production as well as presenting in the studio and reporting in the field. She began her tv career at Yorkshire TV in Leeds in 1982. There she worked on the local news programme Calendar and researched, reported and presented a 20-part series on Economics for Channel 4 TV, called 'A Question of Economics'. She was also involved in a four-part tv documentary series on global food insecurity.

In 1986 Zeinab moved to the BBC where she worked as a reporter on the domestic social affairs programme: Brass Tacks on BBC 2 Television, before she left a year later to join ITN - the Independent Television News Network in London, where she worked for several years as co-presenter on Channel 4 News. After that Zeinab moved to programmes on British politics - based at Westminster. She presented live political programmes interviewing Members of Parliament as well as reporting live from the political party conferences in the UK.

Since the start of the last decade Zeinab has been presenting on BBC World News. In 2009 she was awarded International TV Personality of the Year by the Association of International Broadcasters.

She is currently a patron of the BBC World Service Trust - the charitable arm of the BBC, a board member of the National Portrait Gallery. She has been a board member of the British Council, a former Chair of the London based freedom of speech campaign organisation, Article 19, a board member of the Overseas Development Institute.

She speaks good Arabic and has four children.