AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Morocco Summary 29 October 2026

King Mohammed VI appoints Marrakesh mayor Fatima Ezzahra El Mansouri on 29 September as Morocco's first woman prime minister, marking a historic moment for the country. Parti authenticité et modernité (PAM), which won the most seats in parliament in the September legislative election, confirms on 12 October that it will form a coalition government with three other parties. This notably excludes former prime minister Aziz Akhannouch's Rassemblement National des Indépendants (RNI), the largest party in the former parliament. King Mohammed appoints a new 32-member cabinet on 16 October, bringing together experienced ministers and new appointees.

King Mohammed VI appoints Morocco's first woman prime minister

King **Mohammed** VI (1999-present) appointed **Marrakesh** mayor **Fatima Ezzahra El Mansouri** on 29 September as Morocco's first woman prime minister, marking a historic moment for the country. Mohammed appointed the 50-year-old lawyer days after her party, the **Parti Authenticité et Modernité (PAM)**, won the most seats in the country's 23 September parliamentary elections *(see ARC Briefing Morocco Oct 2026)*. She succeeds billionaire **Aziz Akhannouch** (2021-2026) as prime minister and will lead a new administration after negotiating with other parties to form a coalition government (see below). Speaking on her appointment in a televised address on 29 September, El Mansouri said that it was *"truly historic"* and that it was *"a source of pride not only for me but for all Moroccan women"*.

While PAM secured 97 seats in the election, up from 87 in the previous polls, it cannot secure the 198 needed for an outright majority, as Morocco's electoral system does not allow parliamentary majorities, so coalition governments are customary. Despite this, the country's constitution mandates that King Mohammed, who holds ultimate power, appoint a prime minister from the party that secures the most parliamentary seats in the elections.

El Mansouri's appointment as premier was a surprise. PAM's campaign manager, **Fouzi Lekjaa**, currently finance minister – and former **Royal Moroccan Football Federation** president and budget minister in the previous administration - was widely expected to become prime minister. In the weeks before the election, several political parties sought to recruit Lekjaa but he ultimately announced on 25 July that he was joining PAM *(see ARC Briefing Morocco Aug 2026)*. By recruiting Lekjaa, PAM hoped to capitalise on his popularity as a *"working-class hero"* with strong support among the youth in a country where football is overwhelmingly popular.

It remains unclear why Lekjaa was not appointed prime minister. A regional analyst told ARC Briefing that some party officials believed El Mansouri had *"proven her leadership"* as coordinator of PAM's collective leadership since February 2024, making her the natural choice to lead the new government. Her appointment would also carry historic significance, as she would become Morocco's first woman prime minister, reinforcing the country's image as a progressive country in the region. Some local analysts believe Lekjaa would have accepted the decision had he not been selected. Nevertheless, the delay in announcing El Mansouri's appointment, compared with announcements after previous elections, has fuelled speculation about behind-the-scenes manoeuvring over who would ultimately lead the new government.

El Mansouri's rise to national leadership reflects a career spanning local government, national politics, and public administration. She was born in Marrakesh in 1976. She studied law and obtained a diploma in advanced studies from the **University of Montpellier (France)**, as well as a qualification in Anglo-Saxon business law from **New York University (United States)**. She entered local politics in 2009, becoming the first woman to serve as mayor of Marrakesh. She later returned to lead the city's municipal council following the 2021 elections. She also served successive terms as a member of Morocco's house of representatives, gaining experience in national politics. El Mansouri joined the national government in October 2021 as national spatial planning, urban development, housing and urban policy minister under Akhannouch. Her responsibilities included housing support programmes, urban planning reforms, and relocating people affected by the 2023 **Al Haouz** earthquake. She has also co-led the PAM since 2024.

PAM secures deal to form new government

After appointing the prime minister, King Mohammed formally asked El Mansouri on 29 September to form a new government, with the new ruling coalition announcing on 12 October that PAM had reached an agreement with three smaller parties to form a coalition government.

Alongside PAM's 97 seats in parliament, Akhannouch's **Rassemblement National des Indépendants (RNI)**, the largest party in the former parliament, won the second most seats. RNI secured 66 seats, a dramatic drop from the 102 it won in the 2021 elections. The nationalist **Istiqlal Party** came in third with 65 seats, and the Islamist **Parti de la justice et du développement (PJD)**, which formed part of Morocco's governments from 2011 to 2021, secured 54 seats - four times more than it did in 2021. Other smaller parties won a combined 113 seats.

The new coalition government agreement brings together El Mansouri's PAM, the **Istiqlal Party**, the **Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP)**, which won 26 seats in the election, and the **Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme (PPS)**, which secured 19 seats. Together, the parties control 207 of the 395 seats in parliament, exceeding the 198 required for a majority. Notably, the ruling coalition excludes RNI.

El Mansouri had informed reporters on 24 September that PAM was open to discussions with all parties in the hope of forming a coalition government. She had said during the campaign that PAM would not invite the RNI into an alliance but later emphasised that there are *"no red lines"* in negotiations and that PAM *"have turned the page"*. However, excluding RNI from the ruling coalition raises questions about whether PAM is distancing itself from the previous administration. PAM was the junior partner in the former ruling coalition led by the RNI. Meanwhile, a joint statement from the coalition said that the coalition agreement:

> *"Produces a strong political government, made up of components marked by ideological and political proximity, united in, and committed to, a shared reformist vision".*

The incoming government will be responsible for completing the final phase of a $20 billion investment programme to prepare Morocco to co-host the 2030 FIFA World Cup and face mounting pressure to address young people's concerns about employment, education, and healthcare, issues that fuelled last year's Gen Z-led protests and the migration crisis in **Ceuta** in July *(see ARC Briefing Morocco Aug 2026)*. El Mansouri's appointment is also significant for representation in Moroccan politics but women still face barriers to employment and education, issues she will be expected to address. appointment puts her at the centre of Morocco's next political and economic phase.

However, the coalition's formation does not necessarily signal a major shift in Morocco's political direction. King Mohammed VI retains extensive powers over areas such as foreign

policy and defence. El Mansouri's government must therefore balance its reform promises with the existing political system. Its success will depend on its ability to address citizens' economic concerns while delivering on the country's ambitious development plans.

The new cabinet

King Mohammed appointed a new 32-member cabinet on 16 October, bringing together experienced ministers and new appointments. It also includes seven women, reflecting increased women representation in government.

One of the most important appointments is Lekjaa as economy, finance and public sector performance minister. As the former budget minister, Lekjaa comes with extensive experience in preparing government budgets and managing public finances. However, his new role will be particularly important as Morocco seeks to attract investment, finance social programmes and fund preparations for the world cup.

Nine senior ministers also retained their cabinet positions, signalling continuity in key areas of government. **Abdelouafi Laftit** remains the interior minister, while **Nasser Bourita** continues as foreign minister. **Abdellatif Ouahbi** retains the justice portfolio, and **Ahmed Toufiq** remains the endowments and Islamic affairs minister. **Nizar Baraka** also remains the equipment and water minister, with responsibility for forests added to his portfolio. **Charafat Afailal** becomes energy, mines, and sustainable development minster, and **Najwa Koukouss** family affairs, social development, and equality minister. **Kouloub Faitah** is the new minister delegate responsible for relations with parliament and civil society.

The combination of experienced ministers and new appointments suggests an effort to maintain continuity while advancing reforms. Its performance will be measured by whether it can deliver economic improvements and better services for Moroccan citizens.

Planner

2026 **(Morocco)** King **Mohammed VI** expected to make a state visit to **France**;

2026 **Nador (Morocco) Nador West Med** port expected to open

Chronology

26 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Bloomberg.* **Rand Merchant Bank (RMB)** ranks Morocco as **Africa**'s fourth-most attractive investment destination, overtaking **South Africa**, a reflection of Morocco's faster growth and industrialisation progress;

24 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Reuters*. Newly appointed finance and economy minister **Fouzi Lekjaa** says Morocco expects a steady fiscal deficit at 3% of GDP despite higher spending on social programmes and tax cuts;

22 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Pumps Africa*. Morocco launches an international tender for the construction and operation of four to six photovoltaic solar power plants with a combined capacity of at least 350MW as the country advances its renewable energy expansion;

22 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *African Development Bank*. The **African Development Bank Group** approves $487m in funding for Morocco to advance economic reforms, strengthen climate resilience and support more inclusive growth;

19 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News.* Prime minister **Fatima Zahra El Mansouri** presents the new government's programme for 2026-2031, outlining an economic growth target of 5% between 2027 and 2031 and an inflation target of 2%;

14 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News.* Transport and logistics minister **Abdessamad Kayouh** says government plans to invest $13 billion in developing and modernising Morocco's railway network by 2030;

13 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Club of Mozambique.* **Spain**'s King **Felipe** and Queen **Letizia** visit **Ceuta**'s Muslim cemetery where most of the more than 100 migrants who died in July's mass crossing into the North African enclave from Morocco were buried;

12 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News.* **Parti authenticité et modernité (PAM)**, which won 97 of 395 seats in parliament in the September legislative election, confirms it will form a coalition government with three other parties, together holding 207 seats in parliament;

12 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Reuters.* **Spanish** prime minister **Pedro Sanchez** says that Moroccan naval vessels entered Spanish waters off **Ceuta** without permission after late July's mass migrant crossing into the North African enclave;

11 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Sunday World.* King **Mohammed** VI says that Morocco's efforts to curb irregular migration has produced *"concrete results"* but that the current cooperation model with **Spain** had reached its limits amid recurring crises;

9 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Bloomberg.* Morocco plans to propose a new pact with the **European Union (EU)** on migration controls after a surge of illegal crossings into the **Spanish** exclave of **Ceuta** in late July ignited a crisis between the two Mediterranean neighbours;

8 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Reuters.* Morocco's aerospace industry could reportedly increase annual exports to about $5 billion within three years, up from $3 billion last year, as it attracts new suppliers to manufacture high-value parts;

8 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Business Insider Africa.* A few months after placing Morocco's economic growth at 4.1%, the **World Bank** says the country's economy will grow by 4.4%;

7 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Business Insider Africa.* Morocco and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** are expanding their bilateral defence alliance following high-level military discussions in Rabat;

5 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Business Insider Africa.* **United States (US)** defence giant **Lockheed Martin** is seeking to bring more Moroccan manufacturers into its global aerospace and defence supply chain as Morocco expands its ambitions to become a major aerospace and defence hub;

4 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Business Insider Africa.* Morocco has cancelled the bidding process to select a private operator for its $260m **Casablanca** shipyard, ending a contest that had attracted major **Chinese**, **South Korean** and **European** maritime companies;

1 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Reuters.* **Spain**'s King **Felipe** will visit the disputed North African enclaves of **Ceuta** and **Melilla** this month, potentially straining already tense relations between Spain and Morocco following this summer's border crisis;

1 Oct 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Bloomberg.* **United Kingdom (UK)**-headquartered **Amnesty International** alleges that Moroccan authorities used spyware for years against critics in the country and overseas, including **French** and **Spanish** politicians;

30 Sep 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Business Insider Africa.* National carrier **Royal Air Maroc** reaches 70 aircraft, adding a **Boeing 737 MAX 8**, as Morocco expands transport

capacity to support its tourism industry and ambitions to become an international aviation hub;

29 Sep 2026 **Rabat (Morocco)** *BBC.* King **Mohammed** VI names **Marrakesh** mayor **Fatima Zahra El Mansouri** Morocco's first female prime minister, after her centrist **Parti authenticité et modernité (PAM)** won the most seats in last week's parliamentary elections.

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