

## **Saudi king says women will have political role**

**Reuters**

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JEDDAH, Sept 25 – Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah said today women in the conservative Islamic kingdom will have the right to join the advisory Shura Council as full members and participate in future municipal elections, meeting a key goal of liberal activists.

“Because we refuse to marginalise women in society in all roles that comply with syariah, we have decided, after deliberation with our senior ulama (clerics) and others... to involve women in the Shura Council as members, starting from the next term,” he said in a speech delivered to the Shura Council.

“Women will be able to run as candidates in the municipal election and will even have a right to vote,” he added.

Activists in the country have long called for greater rights for women, who are barred from travelling, working or having medical operations without the permission of a male relative and are forbidden from driving.

Those changes will come after municipal elections this Thursday, for which women have been barred from voting or standing office. – Reuters

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