
Kamala Harris, the profile of the candidate running for the White House

(from New York) "Kamala, you may be the first to do many things, but make sure you're not the last." This advice from her mother, posted on the official profile page of US Vice President Kamala Harris, encapsulates the identity of the prospective US presidential candidate. It encompasses her many challenges and achievements, as well as her commitment to achieving this for other women, for minority groups, for those who are still excluded from the country's administration because of the colour of their skin and their origins. *In 2020, Kamala Harris made history as the first black woman to be elected Vice President of the United States, breaking the barriers that have kept men - mostly white - at the highest levels of American politics for more than two centuries. As of Monday, it could happen again, after President Joe Biden dropped out of the presidential race on Sunday 21 July and endorsed Vice-President Kamala Harris to succeed him as the Democratic candidate. Biden's announcement to step down from the race, called for weeks ago, was portrayed by the US press as a patriotic and heroic decision by a man who had prioritised the interests of the country over his own. Together with Harris, he had attempted to reunify the party and direct its efforts towards the common goal of defeating Republican candidate Donald Trump, perceived as a threat to American democracy. Should Harris be elected, she would become the first Black woman to sit in the Oval Office.* The Vice President is thus far the only declared candidate, and in just one day she raised a record-breaking sum of over \$80 million. She successfully re-engaged donors who had previously distanced themselves from the party, secured the endorsement of governors and former presidents, and garnered the support of over 1,340 delegates. With over 600 remaining to be won, she is on track to reach the 1976 threshold that would guarantee her the Democratic nomination. Should the Vice-President exceed this threshold, she will become the first African-American woman to lead the Democratic presidential ticket. Born in Oakland, California, to parents who were prominent figures in the civil rights movement, she frequently recalls that she attended protests from an early age and was raised by adults who "spent all their time marching and shouting for justice." After her parents divorced, Kamala and her sister Maya were raised by their Indian mother, while their father was Jamaican. She was brought up in both Hinduism and Christianity. Hinduism was the religion of her upbringing, while she was introduced to Christianity through a neighbour who took her to the 23rd Avenue Church of God in Oakland. Harris identifies as a Black Baptist. Her husband, Douglas Emhoff, is a Jewish lawyer from Los Angeles. *Her ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds exemplify a widespread reality in the United States, but one that frequently underrepresented in the political sphere.* Her legal studies and her subsequent choice of a career as a prosecutor were likewise a reflection of her family's social commitment. Her role as district attorney in San Francisco and then as attorney general in California evidenced her combative character, to the extent that Donald Trump himself funded her campaign. Her decision not to prosecute sexual offenders within the Catholic Church in California is a notable blemish on her record, while she has been an active defender of abortion rights and the LGBT community. She spearheaded legal action against oil companies that opted for fracking as a drilling method and had a pivotal role in negotiating the \$25 billion settlement during the 2008 mortgage crisis. *Her alignment with Biden's policies in this election campaign will not preclude criticism concerning her leader's missteps, including the border crisis, inflation, and out-of-control government spending.* Furthermore, Harris is not the optimal candidate for a party seeking to appeal to the Midwestern electorate, who continue to favour Trump over the vice-president by a margin of 1.9 percentage points in opinion polls, even though she has not yet formally launched her campaign. Nevertheless, Kamala remains the Democrats' best option, though not the ideal one. She is, however, the one around whom internal discord will subside and shift the focus on winning the November elections.

