



Audiences Understood.
People Empowered.

Luba Kasso
& Richard Addy

MARCH 2026

The Missing Women in Global Power

Half of Society. Less than a Fifth of the
World's Power.

The sixth in the series of Missing Perspectives reports

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Driven by a passion to expose the truth and determination to describe history through evidence in times when data-led facts are being abandoned, we were compelled to compile this report. It tells the story of women's persistent and severe marginalisation in most senior roles in the world today.

We chose evidence from 14 very different sectors, spanning politics and diplomacy, AI and tech, business and economics, science and maths, health and medicine, climate, education, arts, music and film, architecture, and online information sources. Naturally, there are many other sectors that are absent from this report due to limited resources and space but we are confident that they would only reinforce the pattern if included.

Collectively, the featured statistics indicate that women hold no more than 20% of leadership positions, laying bare just how universally excluded women are from the top jobs responsible for defining the direction of travel for the whole of humanity.

In a world which is enduring what feels like an exponential growth in men-made wars, it is very disconcerting to see that only 1 in 14 peace negotiators, 1 in 8 defence ministers, 1 in 6 foreign ministers and 1 in 6 of those serving in the highest governmental offices are women.

Disconcerting as it may be, this disparity offers one explanation for the hawkish state of the world, with diplomacy and politics being dominated by men.

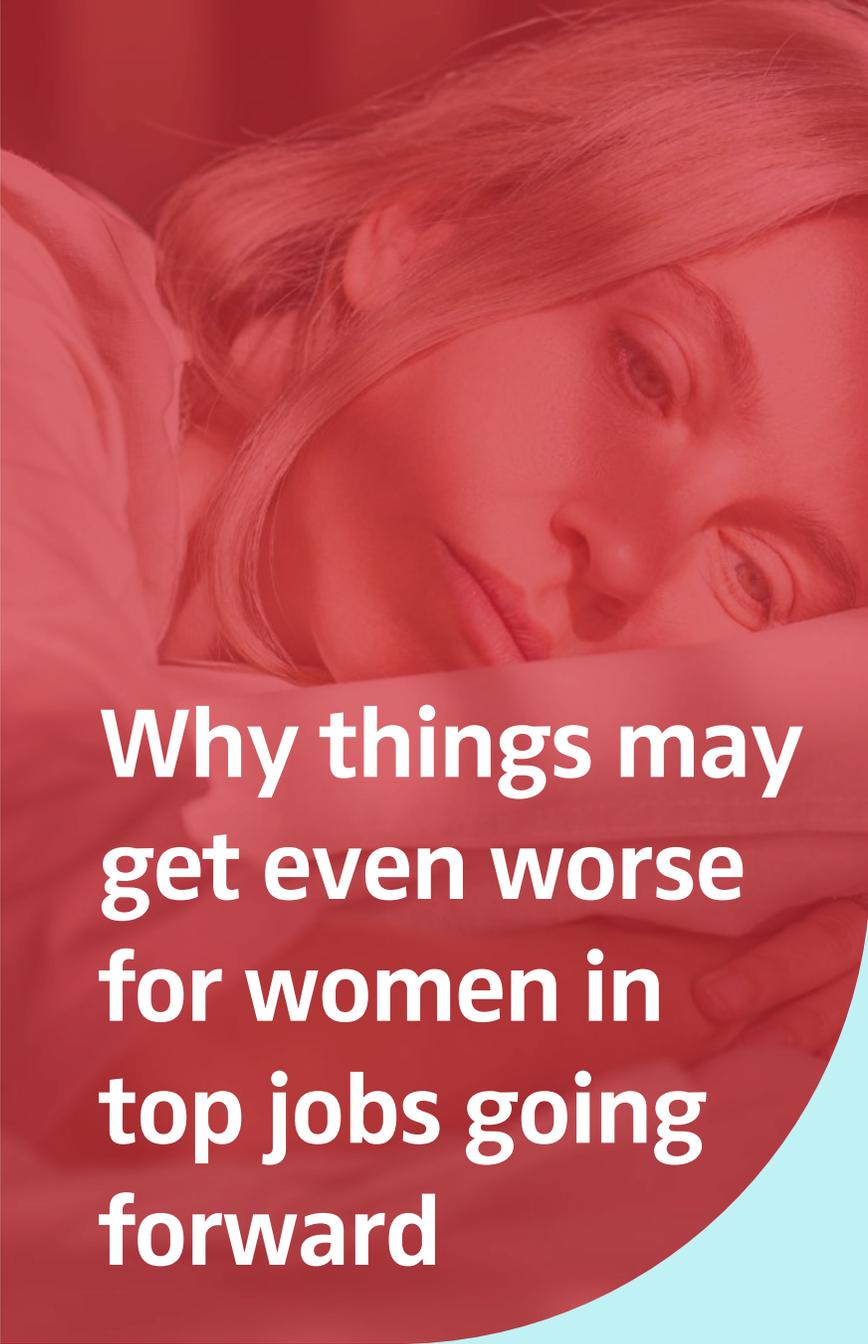
It is no less disconcerting to discover that 9 in 10 of the AI CEOs driving the seismic economic, labour and lifestyle revolution taking place today, are men. I have previously argued that this exclusion from power of AI "godmothers" comes at an incredibly high cost to all.

When we turn to business we find a similar pattern of discrepancy in representation. With only 1 in 14 CEOs in the top 500 global companies being a woman, the world of business remains male-dominated.

Meanwhile, it is hard to make sense of the fact that only 1 in 5 Wikipedia editors, who are crafting our contemporary history, and 1 in 8 of those whose biographies are featured are women.

Despite the pro-female publicity bias that is evident when it comes to reporting women's presence in music and entertainment, women's standing is extremely marginalized in these sectors too. For example, women account for only 1 in 12.5 of performed music composers while in the top 100-grossing films in 2025, only eight were directed by a woman.

What a man's world we continue to build today.



Why things may get even worse for women in top jobs going forward

The last few years have been marked by a discernible decline in global collection of gender data across sectors. Individuals, institutions and societies worldwide have been caught up in the ripple effect of the backlash against diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). The efforts to revert to MOWERS (men who are older, white, well-educated and richer) in top jobs have led to many global businesses, including Accenture, Amazon, Google, Disney, Meta and many others making a U-turn by dropping their global diversity and inclusion goals.

The proliferation of AI tools producing nonconsensual deep fake pornographic imagery has added unimaginable suffering to women, including high-profile women, female journalists and women in politics, making too many of them question whether the cost of visibility has become prohibitively high. At the same time, the rise of authoritarianism globally has come with a directive for women to return to the kitchen, glorifying the 1950s-inspired tradwife status and heaping more pressure on women to step back from high-powered jobs.

The attacks on diversity and inclusion initiatives have led to a tendency to abandon the gathering of women-centred statistics, not least by all the institutions and companies that have abandoned their DEI targets. This tendency has coincided with another trend - to craft narratives that inflate women's otherwise woeful representation. Too often the news reports on any marginal growth in women's pitiful representation in leadership roles as a noteworthy achievement, focusing on the fact that it has reached "highest ever" or "record high" levels instead of acknowledging how egregiously low these levels were in the first place. Half of the world's population is forced to scramble for up to a fifth of the most powerful roles. There is no good news in that.

With attention historically diverted away from gender inequality arguments, and today's censorship or even self-censorship of such issues, the vast majority of people today live their lives not noticing the immovably peripheral role that women play in deciding the fate of the planet and those in it.

While this report aims to raise awareness of women's powerlessness in driving society forward, previous award-winning reports in the Missing Perspectives series (The Missing Perspectives of Women in Covid-19 News, The Missing Perspectives of Women in News, From Outrage to Opportunity and The Missing Voices of Women in Music and Music News) are packed with suggestions and practical recommendations applicable across industries for how to change the status quo. Challenging existing male-favouring social norms is the first step that will underpin success.

If the facts in this report make you uncomfortable, indignant, sad or angry, please share it with others because change most often starts with awareness. We cannot fix a society we don't see as broken, but we can repair it once we see the holes in it.

It only takes a click to start making a difference.

Luba Kassova & Richard Addy



Politics & Diplomacy



15%

of UN member
states have a
woman serving
in the highest
executive office

Date of statistic: September 2025

Source: [UN Women, Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation](#)



18%
of Foreign
Affairs cabinet
ministers are
women

Date of statistic: January 2025

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union/UN Women, Women in Politics 2025

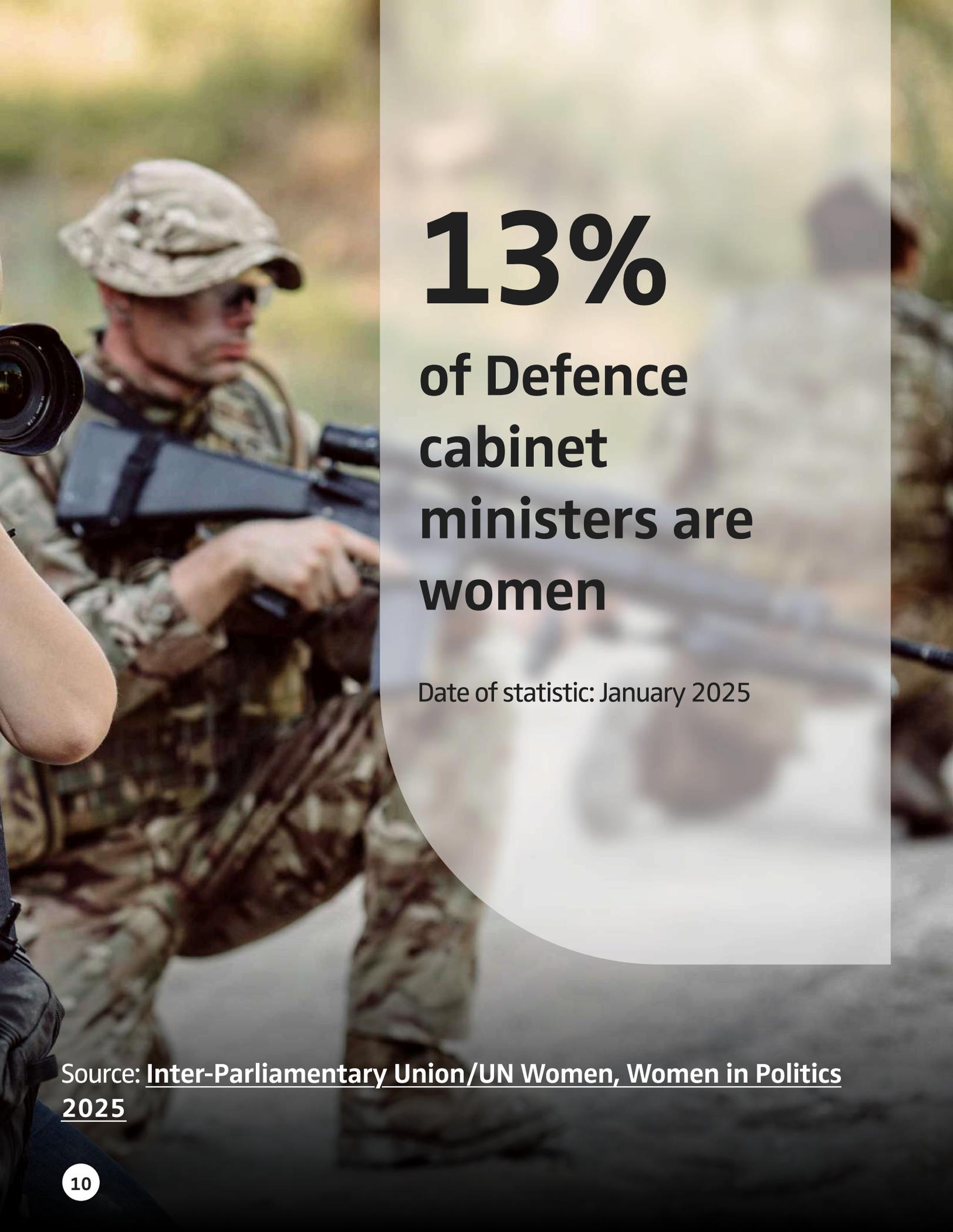


16%

**of Financial and
Fiscal Affairs
cabinet
ministers are
women**

Date of statistic: January 2025

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union/UN Women, Women in Politics
2025



13%

**of Defence
cabinet
ministers are
women**

Date of statistic: January 2025

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union/UN Women, Women in Politics
2025



3%

of UN member
states have
parliaments
which have
achieved gender
parity

Date of statistic: September 2025

Source: UN Women, Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation



7%

**of peace
negotiators are
women**

Date of statistic: October 2025

Source: UN Women, Facts and figures: Women, peace, and security

A close-up profile of a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a dark blazer and a small hoop earring. She is looking towards the right with a slight smile. The background is dark with out-of-focus light spots in shades of blue and white.

Business CEOs, CFOs and Board Chairs



7%

**of CEOs in
Fortune's Global
500 ranking of
the world's
biggest
companies are
women**

Date of statistic: August 2025

Source: **Global Woman Leader: Female Leadership on the Rise: Global 500 Hits Record 6.6% Women CEOs**

A background image of a business meeting in a bright, modern office. Three men in suits are standing near a large window, looking at a tablet held by one of them. In the foreground, a wooden conference table is partially visible with a laptop, glasses of water, and papers.

9%

**of board chairs
in organisations
globally are
women**

Date of statistic: 2024 (reported in
February 2025)

Source: MSCI, Women on boards and beyond – 2024 Progress Report



18%

of CFOs in
organisations
are women

Date of statistic: 2024 (reported in
February 2025)

Source: MSCI, Women on boards and beyond – 2024 Progress Report



Finance



16%

of governors
leading central
banks are
women

Date of statistic: 2025

Source: OMFIF (Official Monetary and Financial Institutions Forum) Gender Balance Index 2025, Franklin Templeton & Women's World Banking



Economics



8%

**of winners of
the Nobel Prize
in Economics in
the last decade
have been
women**

Date of statistic: 2016 - 2025

Source: [The Nobel Prize, All prizes in economic sciences](#)



AI/Technology

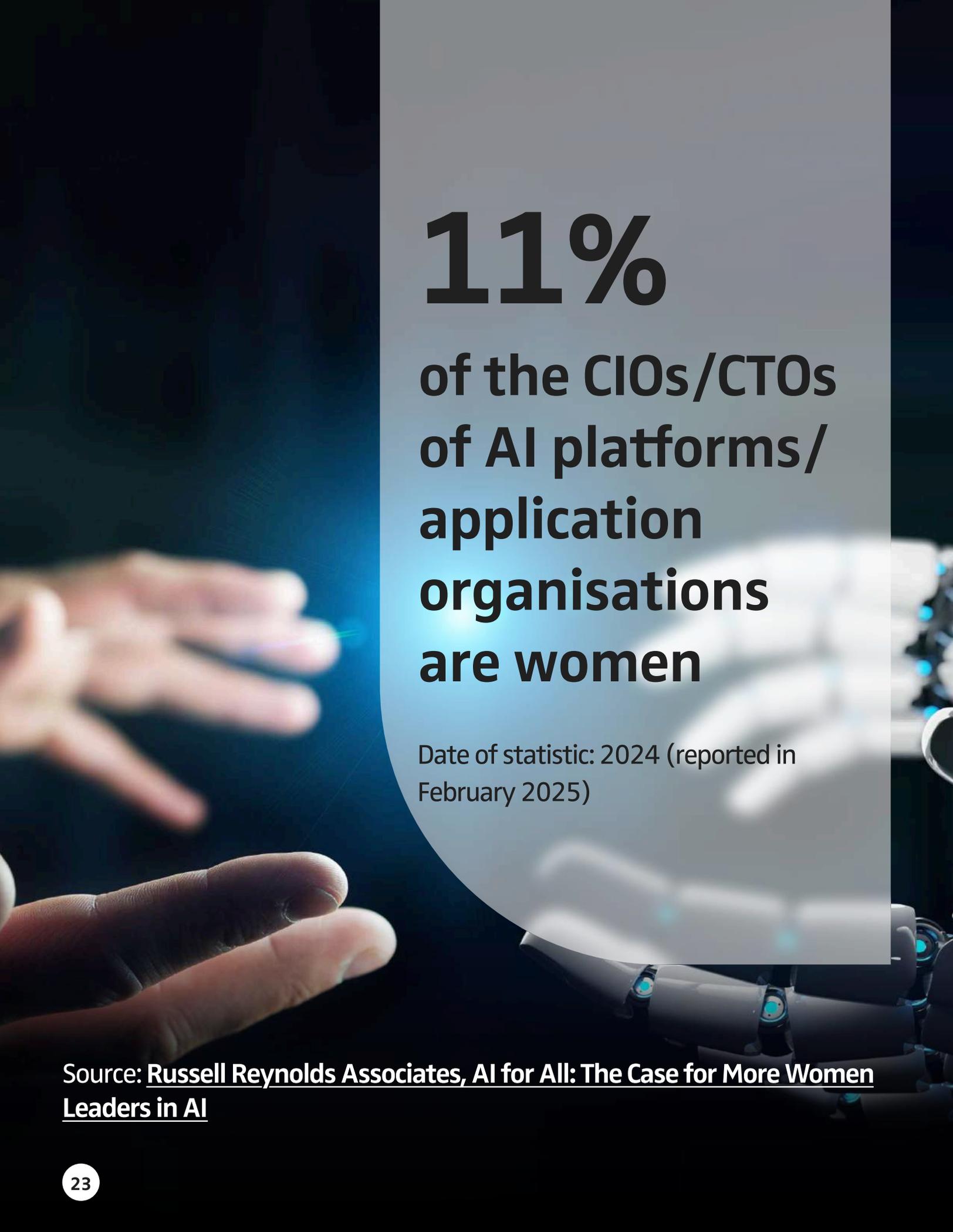


10%

of the CEOs of AI
platform/
application
organisations
are women

Date of statistic: 2024 (reported in
February 2025)

Source: [Russell Reynolds Associates, AI for All: The Case for More Women Leaders in AI](#)

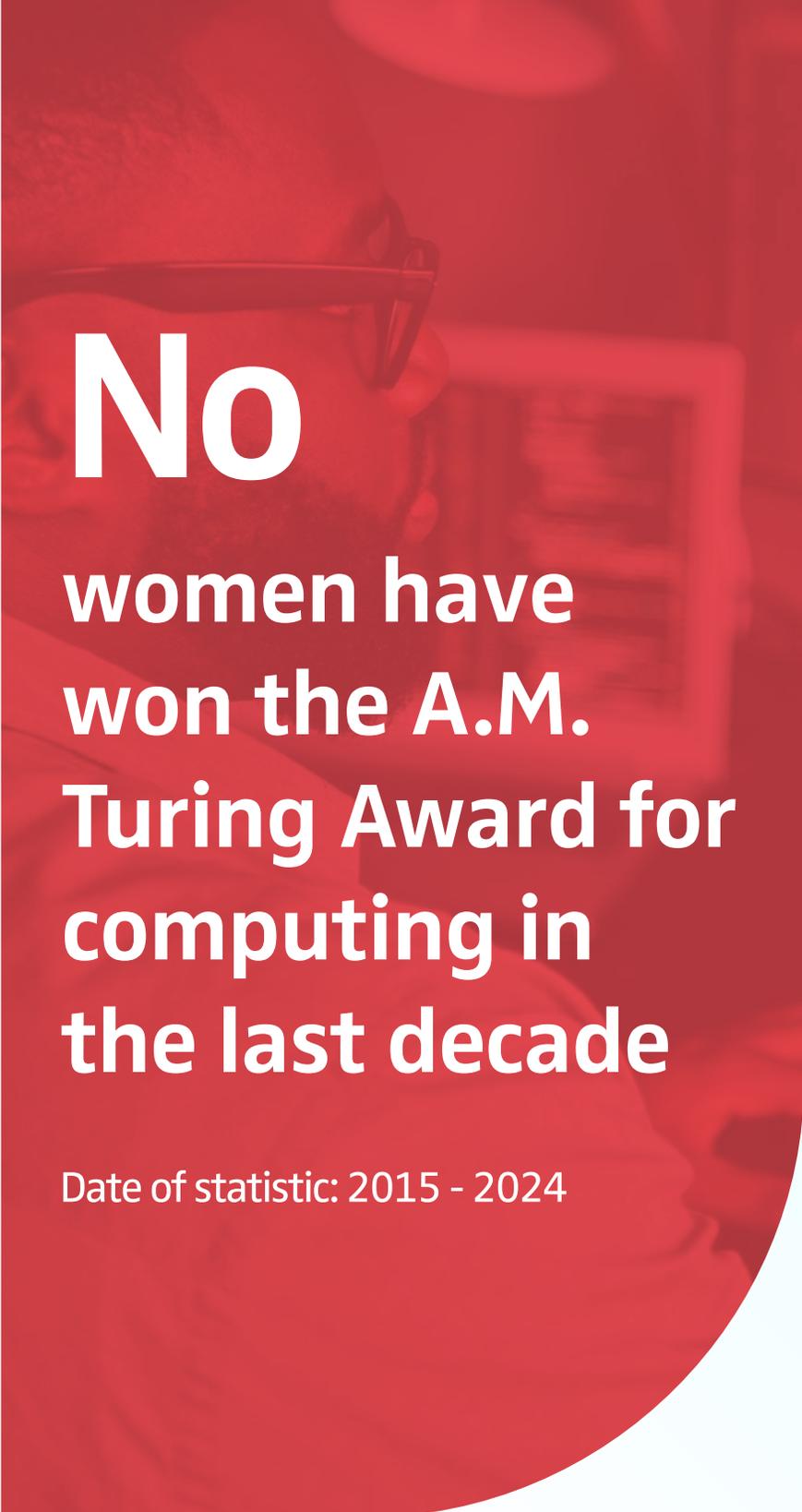


11%

of the CIOs/CTOs
of AI platforms/
application
organisations
are women

Date of statistic: 2024 (reported in
February 2025)

Source: Russell Reynolds Associates, AI for All: The Case for More Women
Leaders in AI



No

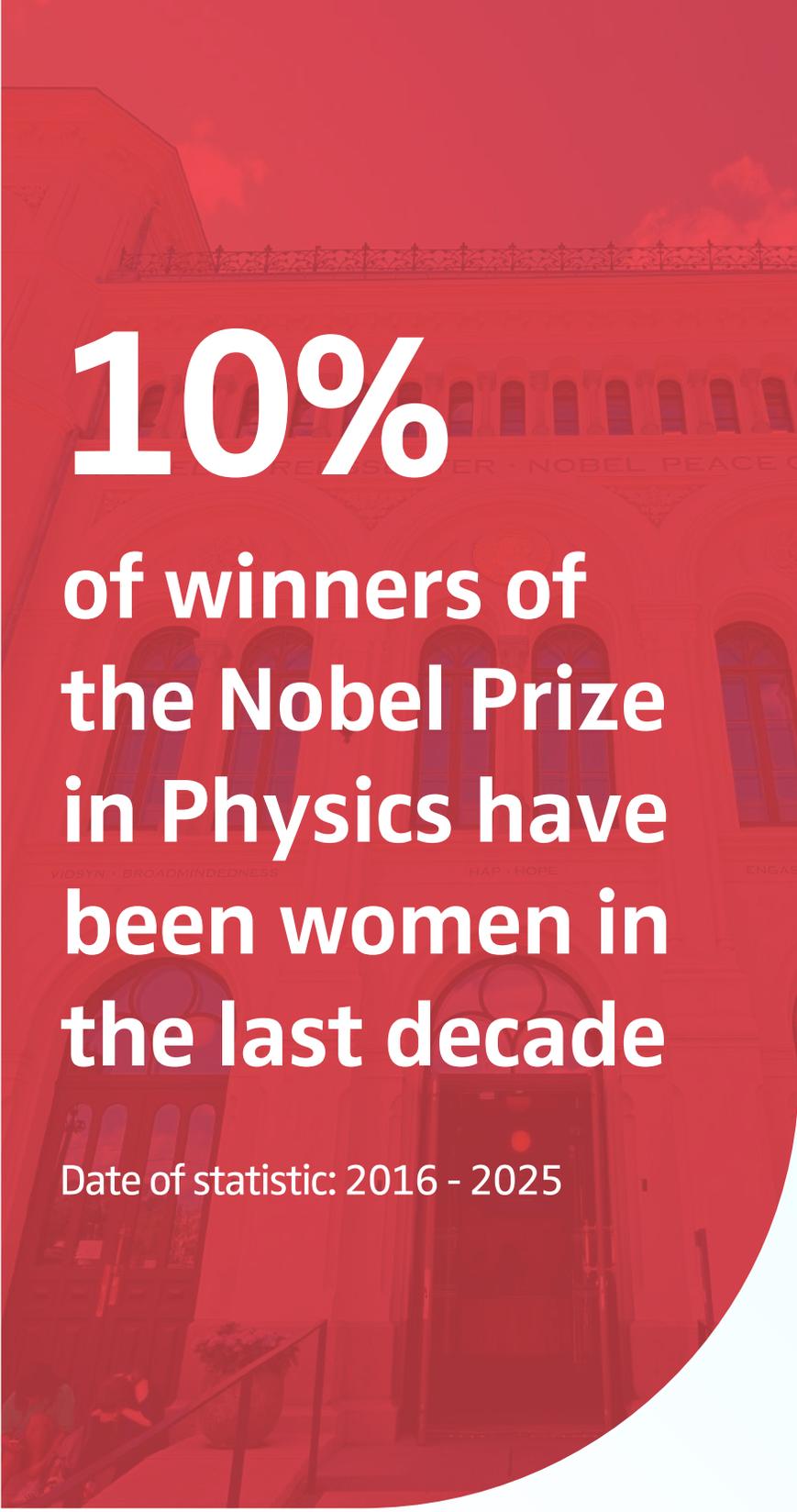
women have
won the A.M.
Turing Award for
computing in
the last decade

Date of statistic: 2015 - 2024

Source: A.M. Turing Award



Sciences & Maths



10%

of winners of
the Nobel Prize
in Physics have
been women in
the last decade

Date of statistic: 2016 - 2025

Source: [The Nobel Prize, All prizes in Physics](#)

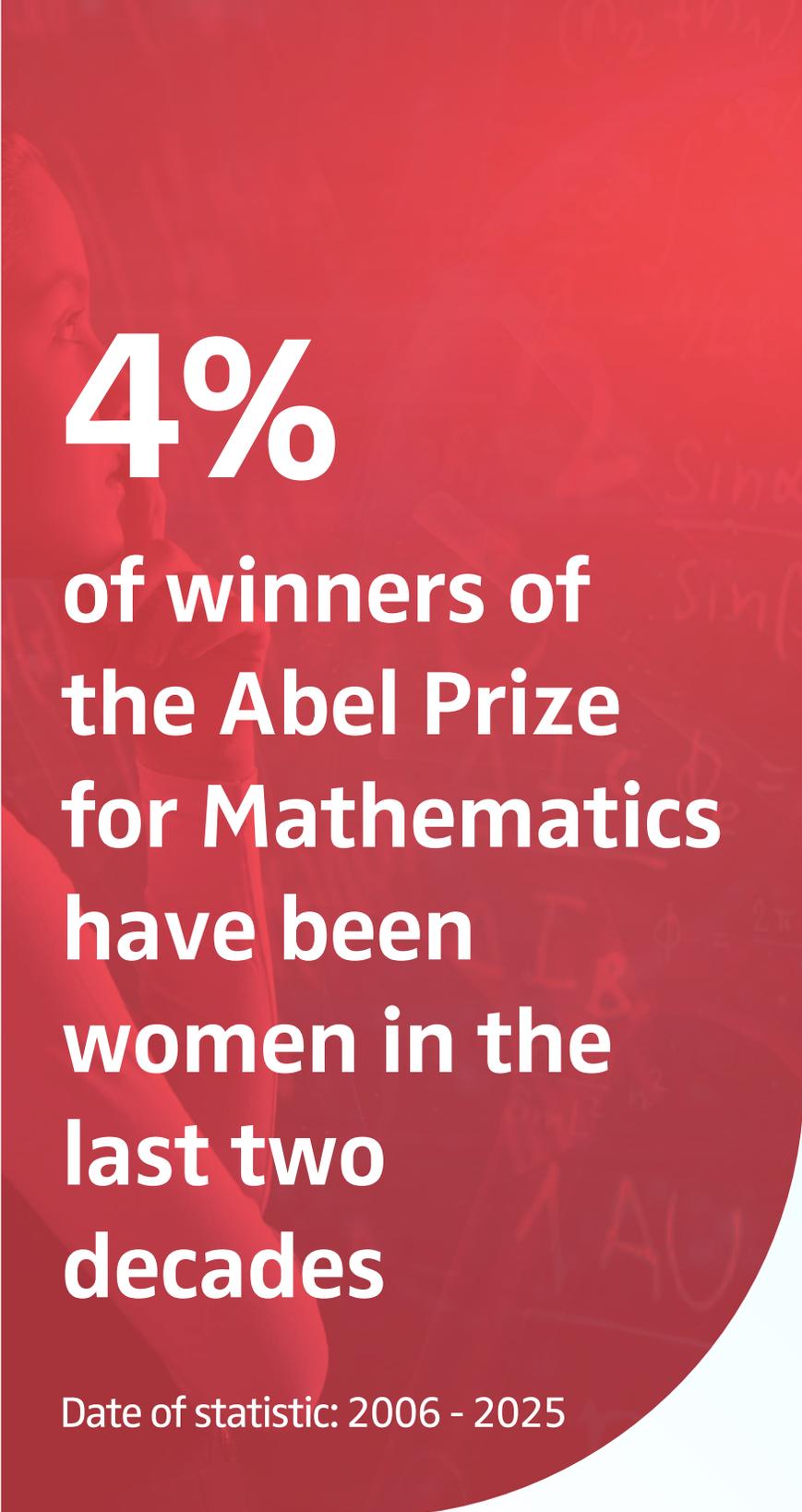
A photograph of a male scientist with a beard and safety glasses, wearing a white lab coat over a blue shirt, working in a laboratory. The background is blurred, showing various pieces of laboratory equipment like beakers and test tubes.

14%

**of winners of
the Nobel Prize
in Chemistry
have been
women in the
last decade**

Date of statistic: 2016 - 2025

Source: [The Nobel Prize, All prizes in Chemistry](#)



4%

**of winners of
the Abel Prize
for Mathematics
have been
women in the
last two
decades**

Date of statistic: 2006 - 2025

Source: [The Abel Prize](#)

A photograph of an astronaut in a white space suit, seen from the side and back, floating in space. The suit has various equipment, including a large white helmet with a blue visor and a 'PU' label. The background is a bright, hazy white, suggesting the sun or a bright light source in space.

11%

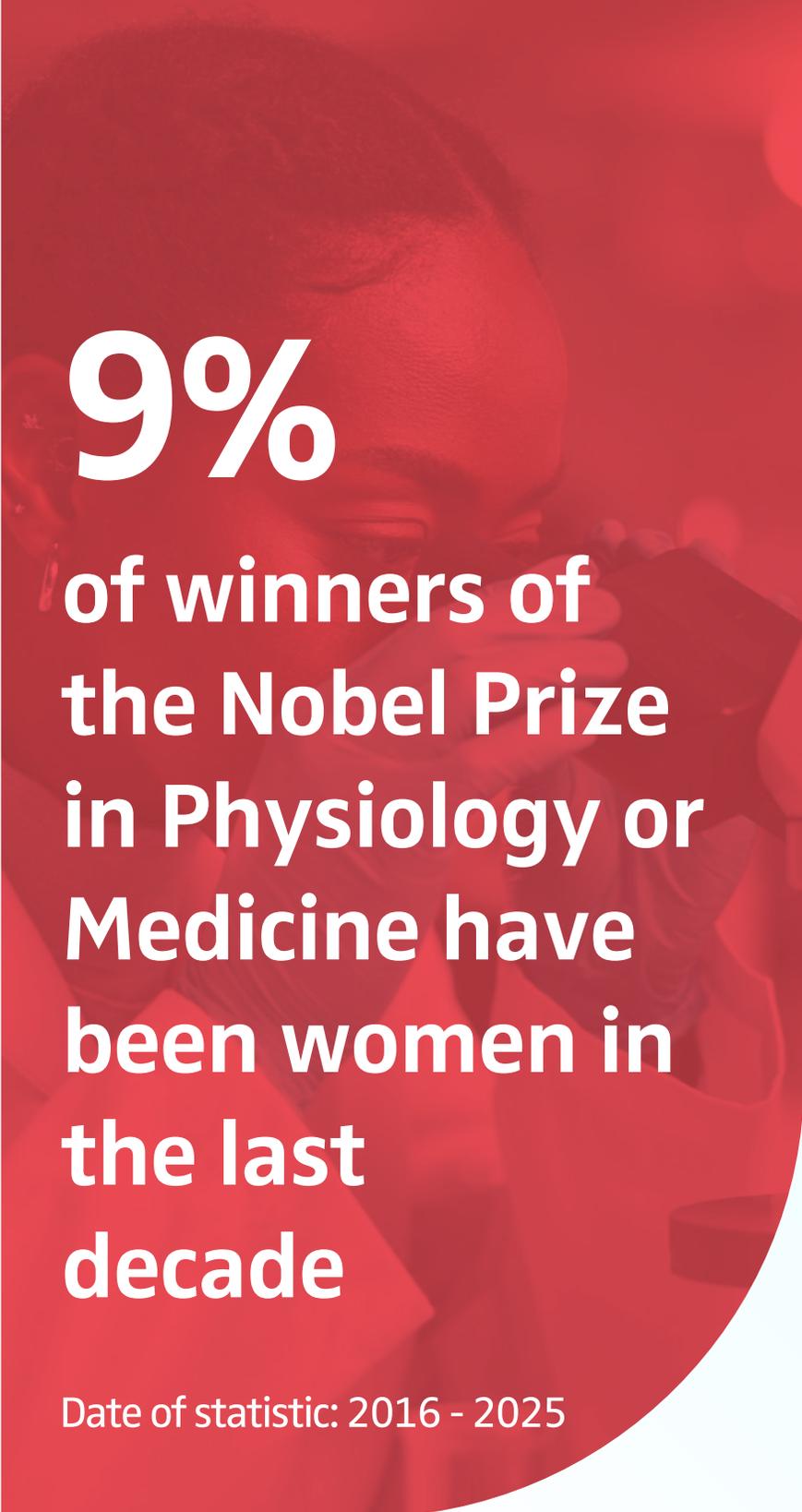
of astronauts worldwide are women

Date of statistic: 2021 (reported in 2025)

Source: United Nations, Office for Outer Space Affairs: Space for women: Landmark study on gender equality in the global space sector



Health & Medicine



9%

**of winners of
the Nobel Prize
in Physiology or
Medicine have
been women in
the last
decade**

Date of statistic: 2016 - 2025

Source: [The Nobel Prize, All prizes in Physiology or Medicine](#)



Online Information Sources



19%

of all
biographies on
Wikipedia are
about women

Date of statistic: 2023 (Community
Insights Survey, 2023)

Source: [Wikimedia Foundation: Wikipedia needs more women. Let's close the gender gaps and change the stats](#)

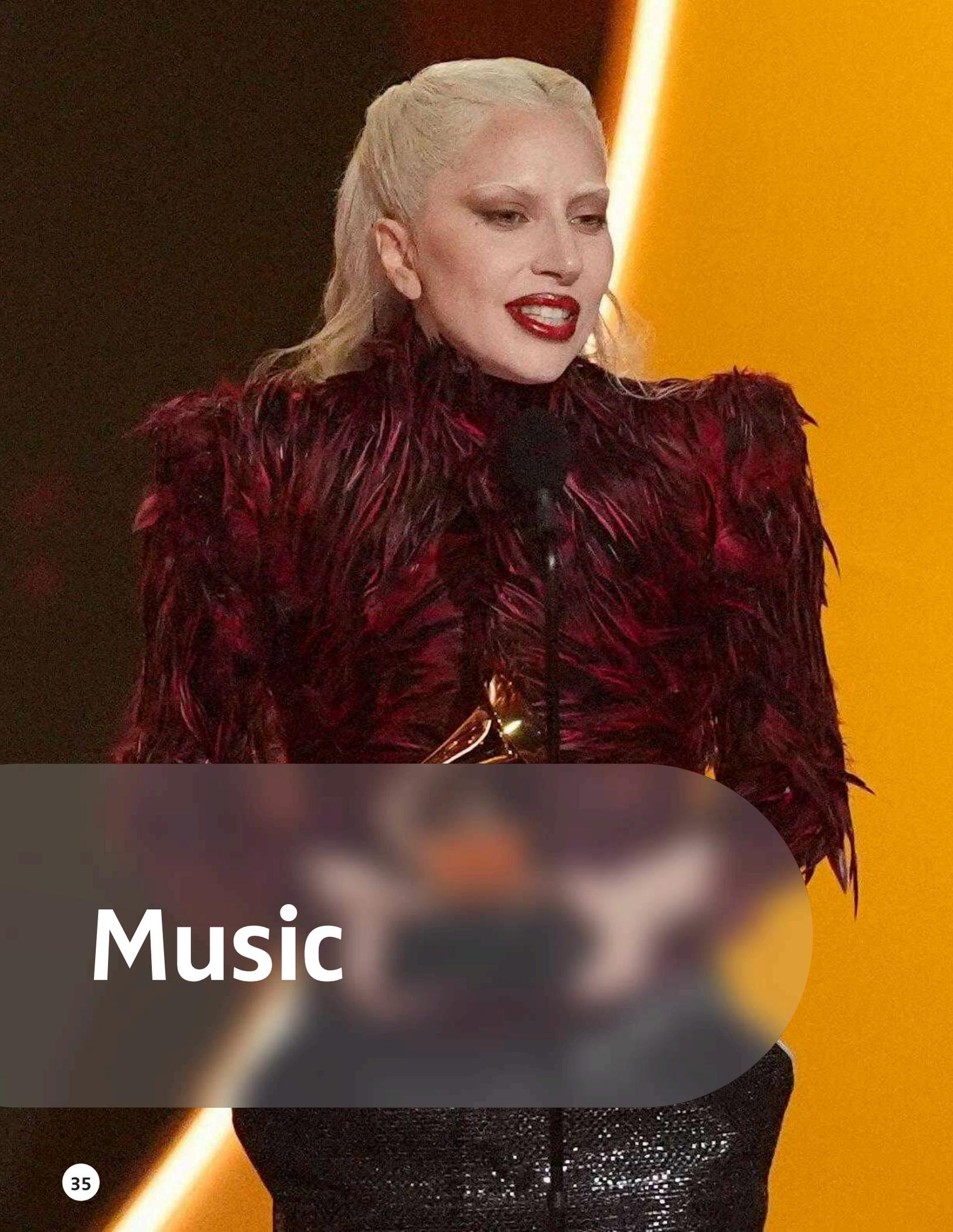


13%

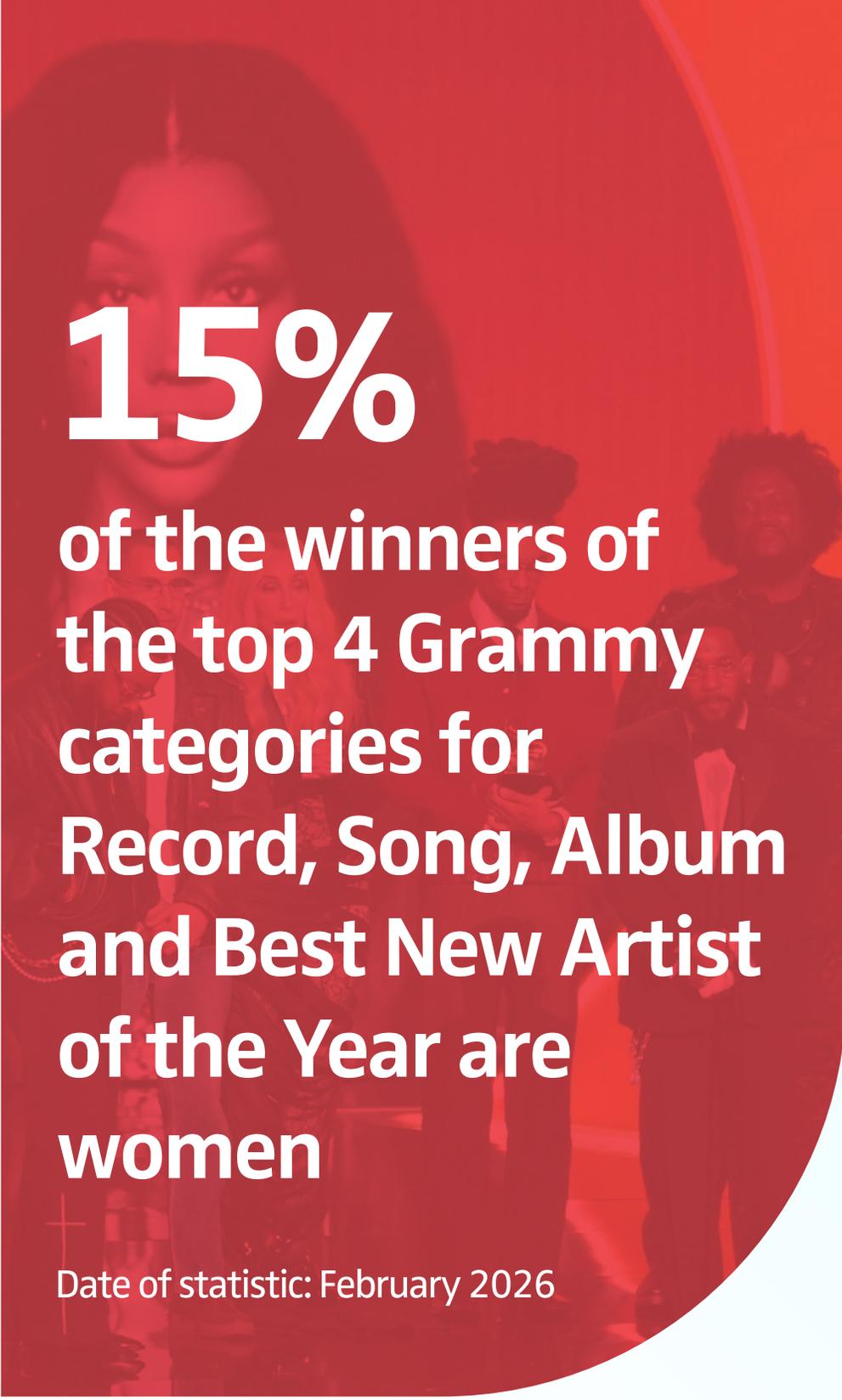
**of Wikipedia
editors identify
as women**

Date of statistic: 2023 (Community
Insights Survey, 2023)

Source: [Wikimedia Foundation: Wikipedia needs more women. Let's close the gender gaps and change the stats](#)



Music



15%

of the winners of
the top 4 Grammy
categories for
Record, Song, Album
and Best New Artist
of the Year are
women

Date of statistic: February 2026

Source: [AKAS: The Missing Voices of Women in the 2026 Grammys](#)

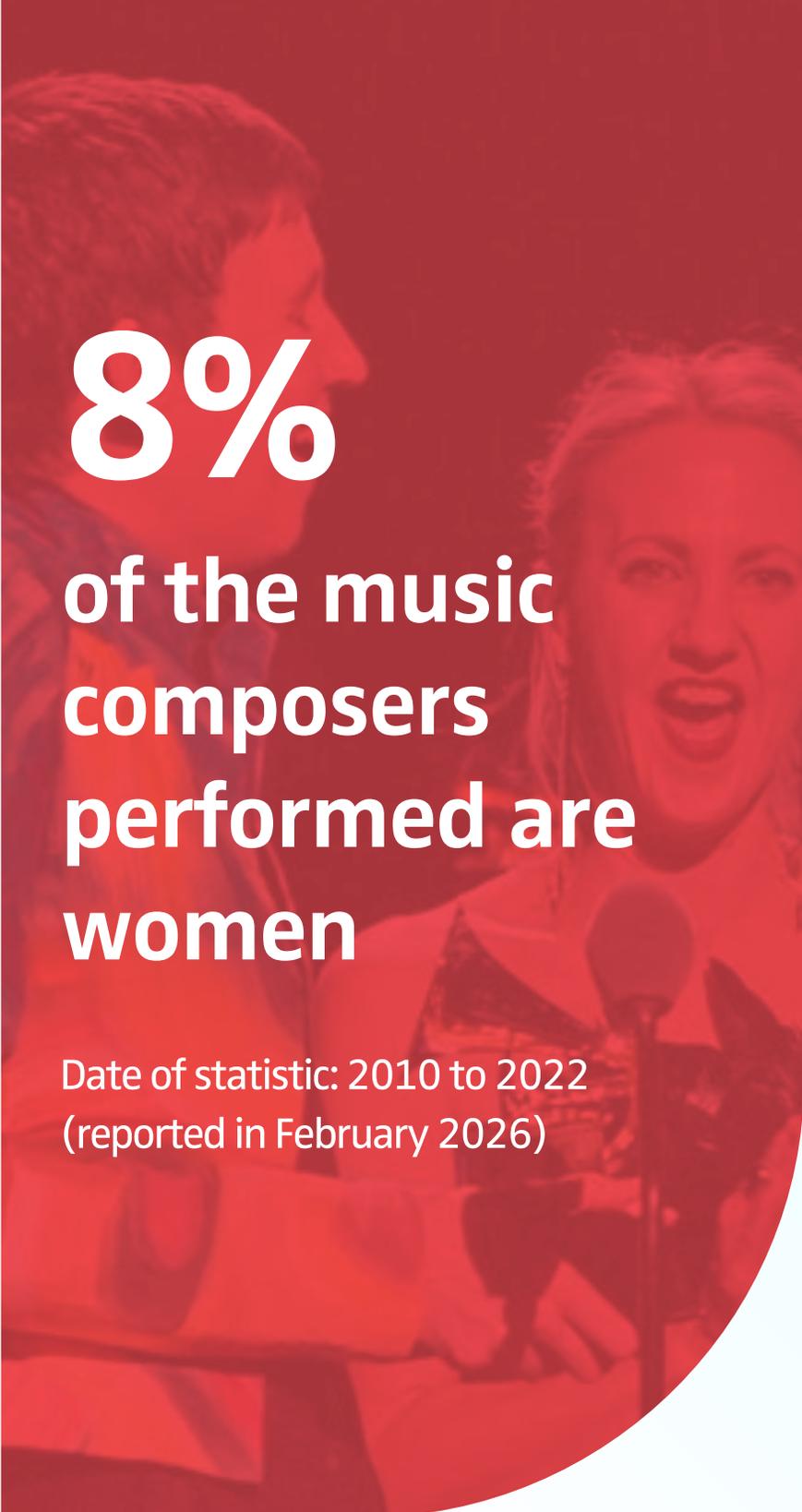


No

woman has ever won the Producer of the Year (Non-classical) Grammy since it was introduced in 1975

Date of statistic: February 2026

Source: [AKAS: The Missing Voices of Women in the 2026 Grammys](#)



8%

**of the music
composers
performed are
women**

Date of statistic: 2010 to 2022
(reported in February 2026)

Source: Association of Cultural Economics International, How orchestras can advance women composers



Film



8%

of the directors
of the top 100-
grossing films in
2025 are women

Date of statistic: December 2025

Source: [Yahoo: Top-Grossing Films Directed By Women Take Steep Drop In 2025, Report Finds](#)



20%

**of the winners of
the best director
category in the
Oscars in the last
two years have
been women**

Date of statistic: 2024 - 2025

Source: [The Inclusion List](#)



Arts



16%

**of global fine art
auction turnover
relates to
women artists**

Date of statistic: 2023-2024

Source: Women in Art Prize, Women In Art – Get the Facts



Architecture



20%

of winners of
the Pritzker
Architecture
Prize in the last
two decades
have been
women

Date of statistic: 2006 - 2025

Source: Pritzker Architecture Prize



Climate Change & Renewable Energy

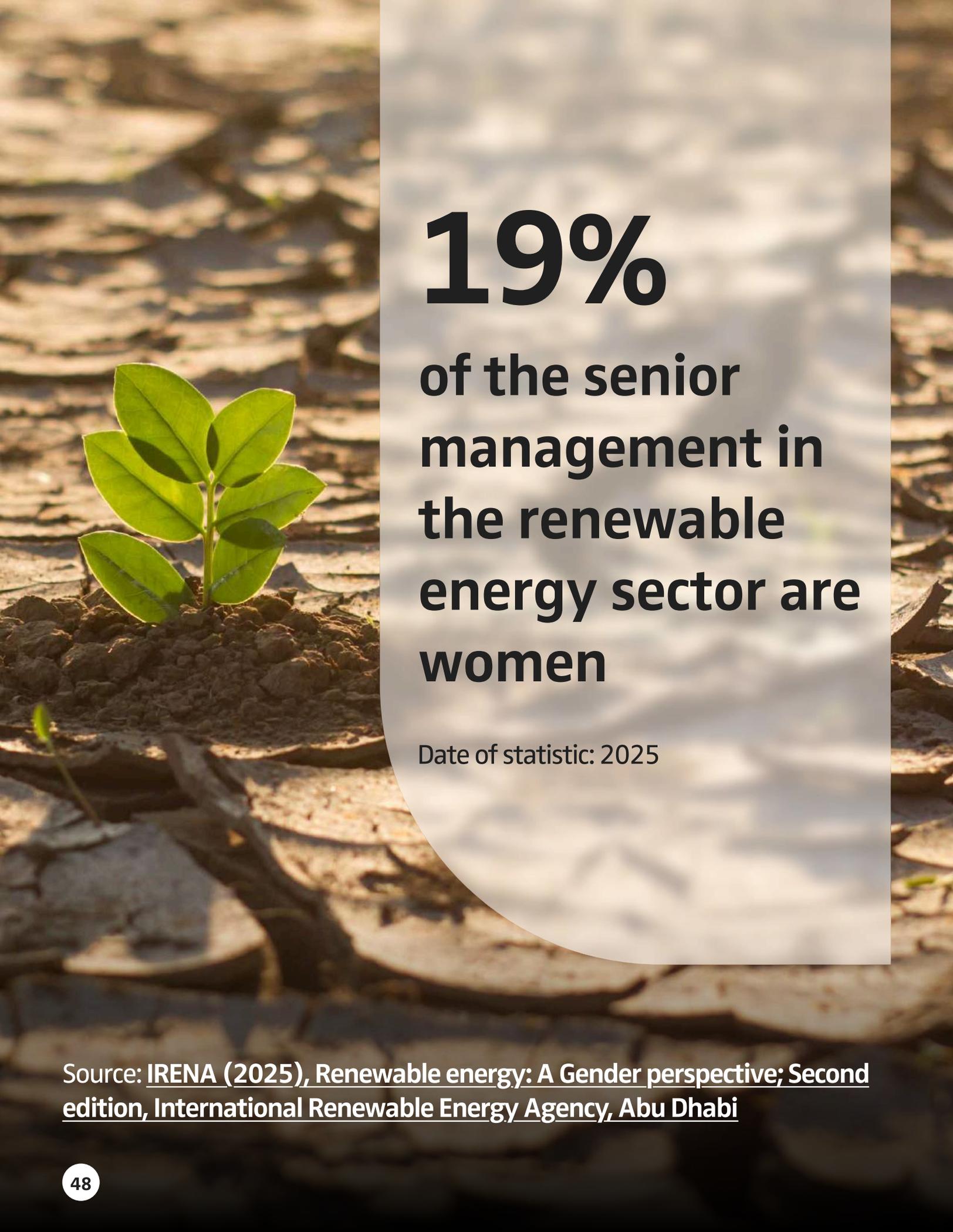


10%

of CEOs in
Climate Tech
startups are
women

Date of statistic: 2023 (Published in
March 2024)

Source: [Holon IQ, The 2024 Global State of Women's Leadership](#)



19%

**of the senior
management in
the renewable
energy sector are
women**

Date of statistic: 2025

Source: IRENA (2025), Renewable energy: A Gender perspective; Second edition, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi



Education



17%

of CEOs in
EdTech startups
are women

Date of statistic: 2023 (Published in
March 2024)

Source: Holon IQ, The 2024 Global State of Women's Leadership

Authors' Biographies



Luba Kassova Luba Kassova is the author of the award-winning The Missing Perspectives report series. A co-founder of international audience strategy consultancy AKAS, Luba is a researcher, journalist and strategist for purpose-led organisations, having previously headed up the Audiences team for BBC News. Her reports/articles have been published or quoted in more than 300 news outlets across 80 countries, including in The Guardian, Fortune, The Independent, The Conversation, and Foreign Policy. Luba is currently working towards a PhD at the University of Westminster, examining the absence of women's perspectives along the news value chain and the detrimental impact of this on women and society as a whole.



Richard Addy is the Missing Perspectives series quantitative research lead. A co-founder of AKAS, Richard has over 30 years' experience as a strategist and has advised CEOs, organisational leaders, and previously government ministers in his role as a government economist. Richard has developed an impacts reporting framework used by leading news organisations including The Guardian, AP News, BBC World Service, El Pais, The Daily Telegraph, NPR, CNN, Der Spiegel and Le Monde. Prior to setting up AKAS, Richard was the chief adviser on strategic and audience issues to the BBC's Deputy Director General who was responsible for BBC News locally, nationally and internationally. He is a Board member of theguardian.org and Africa No Filter. He has previously served on the BBC's Journalism Board, Mind's Board of Trustees and USC Annenberg's Media Impact Project. Richard has a BSc in Economics from Warwick University and an MSc in Economics from Birkbeck College, University of London.



Audiences Understood.
People Empowered.

AKAS, an international audience strategy and impact measurement consultancy, is the engine behind the multiple research methods that underpin this report. It supports original journalism and advises media, international institutions, philanthropic foundations, NGOs and other purpose-led organisations. In a world where polarisation is an ever-growing threat, AKAS aspires to unify people and organisations by deepening their understanding of themselves and others.