

Press Release

The Attack on the Niqab Strikes the Entire Muslim Community

The Upper House of the State's General (The Senate) will make a final decision the coming Tuesday 26th of June regarding the highly discriminatory "burqa ban." Based on earlier voting's held in the Upper House, it's likely that there will be a vote for a ban on wearing the burqa.

If the burqa ban becomes law, you can expect signs and stickers in public spaces saying "access forbidden for Muslimas with niqab" or "face-covering veils". Whether or not red prohibition signs of this nature will become reality remains uncertain, but one thing is certain, Muslimas (Muslim women) with "face-covering veils" aren't welcome in for example educational institutions, healthcare institutions, public transport and government buildings. They aren't allowed to enter, they will be sent away and they will be fined.

In practice a Muslima that chooses to wear a face-covering veil will not be allowed to enter the metro or bus, while a drunken, partygoer wearing a mask may. Also a Muslima wearing a niqab isn't allowed to pick up her children from the schoolyard or attend PTA-meetings while someone wearing a winter scarf can. Likewise a Muslimah wearing a nikaab isn't allowed to visit the general practitioner, the hospital or city hall. Her access will be refused just because she wears an extra piece of fabric in front of her face.

On top of that our sisters will be forced into isolation and if they still choose to venture the streets wearing their niqab they're at risk of being cursed at, spat on and physically abused because for years they've been demonized and de-humanized by the anti-Muslim propaganda in the Netherlands.

This, in other words, is called oppression. One can boast about the so-called exalted secular norms and values and her so-called constitutional freedoms like "freedom of expression", "freedom of religion." But reality proves that they are nothing but empty slogans used to tighten the thumbscrews in regards to the Muslims.

Dear Muslims,

As you've seen oftentimes, when it comes to the niqab of our sisters, double standards are applied. Looking at the practical enforcement of this new law, it becomes clear that the exceptions raised in it are such that one can deduce that this law solely targets Muslimas that wear face-covering veils because of an Islamic conviction. They also use obsolete arguments regarding security and communication that make no sense and are in fact part of facade politics.

Dear Muslims,

When our Muslim women get restricted in their obedience to their Lord, the Muslim community should join forces as to protect their rights. Even if not all Muslims follow the opinion that wearing a face-covering veil is mandatory. We should realize that this is a legitimate opinion within Islamic jurisprudence and that an attack on the face-covering veil is an attack on an Islamic custom.

Dear Muslims,

We from Hizb ut Tahrir / The Netherlands have often raised the alarm in respects to the increasingly grimmer anti-Islamic policies in the Netherlands. In respect to the niqab, we attempted to draw the attention of the Muslim community regarding this issue via various publications and campaigns, like #TegenNiqabverbod.

In 2017 we, together with representatives of the Islamic community, including several imams, preachers, politicians issued a statement in which we condemned “the law on the partial prohibition of the face-covering veil.” In this statement, we expressed our concerns regarding the discriminatory nature of this law. The statement was sent to the Upper House of the State’s General (The Senate) with the urgent request not to pass this law. However, it seems that the law will be passed anyway.

That is why address the Muslim community yet again as to appeal to their responsibility to make their voices heard again before this ban becomes law. We have but a small week (until the 26th of June) to act against it. Remaining silent, while our sisters are being oppressed is not an option. Despite the fact that we, the Muslim community, are a minority and have limited resources to our disposal, we can do much more than what we have done until now. The responsibility lays on the shoulders of the Muslim community. If we as a Muslim community don’t stand up for each other and for the interests of the Muslims, then who will? We therefore want to remind you of the words of Allah (swt): ﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ﴾ **“The believing men and women are allies of one and other...”** [Surah at Tawbah, verse 71]

Let us move as individuals and as groups to put the issue regarding the “burqa ban” on the agenda of the Muslim community so that our voice will be heard loud and clear.

With the future in mind, we should consciously undertake steps against anti-Islamic policies. Today it is the niqab, tomorrow it will be the hijab and the jilbab! Don’t let our silence be an encouragement for them to continue. Break the silence and stand up for Islam.

Okay Pala

**Media Representative of Hizb ut Tahrir
in the Netherlands**