

# Iran

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By [RFE/RL's Radio Farda](#)



## Iranian Parliament Unveils New, Stricter Hijab Law Amid Heavy Criticism



Women without hijabs on the streets of Tehran. (file photo)

Iran's parliament **has unveiled** the text of a contentious hijab and chastity bill aimed at confronting, detaining, and penalizing women who fail to observe the compulsory dress code amid a fierce debate over the rules, which have drawn criticism both inside the country and abroad.

The bill, which has received the green light from the legislature's Judicial and Legal Committee, empowers three intelligence agencies -- the Ministry of Intelligence, the Revolutionary Guards Intelligence Organization, and the Intelligence Organization of the Judiciary -- along with police, the Basij paramilitary forces, and the Command of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Wrong, to take action against women who break the rules.

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The legislation also touches on the need for broader gender segregation in universities, administrative centers, educational institutions, parks, and tourist locations, and even in hospital treatment sections. It proposes severe penalties, including imprisonment and fines of up to 360 million Iranian rials (\$720) for women who defy the mandatory hijab law.

According to Article 50 of the bill, anyone who appears in public places or streets in a state of nudity or seminudity, or with a dress that is customarily considered as too revealing, will be immediately apprehended by officers and handed over to the judiciary. Those arrested will face imprisonment or a fine, and if the offense is repeated, the imprisonment or fine will be increased.

The bill also stipulates that anyone who is judged to have insulted the hijab, promoted nudity, immodesty, or an improper hijab, or performs any behavior that promotes them, will be sentenced to a fine and, at the discretion of the judicial authority, a ban on leaving the country and a ban on public activity on the Internet for six months to two years.

The bill also prohibits commissioning work or advertising from individuals or legal entities that promote non-hijab values in their activities inside or outside the country, or in any media, including social media.

The hijab became compulsory for women and girls over the age of 9 in 1981, two years after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The move triggered protests that were swiftly crushed by the new authorities. Many women have flouted the rule over the years and pushed the boundaries of what officials say is acceptable clothing.

Women have also launched campaigns against the discriminatory law, although many have been pressured by the state and forced to leave the country.

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Most recently, the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September in police custody for an alleged hijab violation released a new wave of anger that has presented the Islamic regime with its biggest challenge since the revolution.

The Woman, Life, Freedom protests and civil disobedience against the compulsory hijab have swept the country, involving tens of thousands of Iranians, many of whom were already upset over the country's deteriorating living standards.

The protests have also been buffeted by the participation of celebrities, sports stars, and well-known rights activists, prompting a special mention of such luminaries in the legislation.

In the face of the unrest, some religious and government figures have repeatedly advocated for a tougher stance by the government against offenders, even going as far as encouraging a "fire-at-will" approach against noncompliant women.

While the protests appear to be waning, resistance to the hijab is likely to increase, analysts say, as it is seen now as a symbol of the state's repression of women and the deadly crackdown on society.

In recent weeks, the authorities have also shut down businesses, restaurants, cafes, and in some cases pharmacies due to the failure of owners or managers to observe Islamic laws and hijab rules.

Written by Ardeshir Tayebi based on an original story in Persian by RFE/RL's Radio Farda

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