



Iranian women walk on a street during the revival of morality police in Tehran, Iran, July 16, 2023.

In Fear Of Backlash, Iran Hijab Bill Moves To Secret Talks

7 hours ago 4 minutes

Author: Iran International Newsroom

[Politics](#) [Iran Protests](#) [Human Rights](#)



Iran's new hijab bill is becoming murkier still as the parliament has moved to approve it without an open session in fear of further backlash.

The fate of the hijab bill, which legal experts claim is against the Iranian Constitution and not practical to implement due to the government's limited means, took an obscure turn last week after months of heated debate on how to translate it into society.

During a closed-door session on Sunday, Iranian lawmakers voted – 171 for versus 40 against – that the bill can be considered under Article 85 of the constitution which greenlights the parliament to discuss the bill only in an

internal committee and not on the parliament floor, practically sidelining any opposition. The decision was a straw poll and is not yet final, to be discussed and put to a final vote in the coming days. The result of the final vote is clear because the parliamentary party that holds the majority has backed the move.

Normally, the parliament cannot delegate its legislative authority but in necessary cases, it can assign an internal committee to formulate certain laws. The determination of the committee is then sent to the Guardian Council and if it deems the decisions do not go against the Constitution, they can be piloted in the country for a time span determined by the parliament.

A session of the Iranian parliament

Regime lawmaker Moineddin Saeedi, representing the city of Chabahar in the underprivileged province of Sistan and Baluchestan, said "This bill will be discussed in a joint committee without the public being informed of its details, much like the Siyanat (Protection) plan." Ironically titled Legislation to Protect Cyberspace Users' Rights, the Siyanat plan is a **draft bill by ultra-hardliners approved by an ad hoc parliamentary committee** in February that led to stricter restrictions on social messaging platforms and access to the global net.

Expressing worries about the repercussions of disregarding the people's views on the measure, Saeedi said that implementing the bill this way would only, contrary to the regime's plans, exacerbate popular concerns.

According to lawmaker Ahmad Naderi, a member of the parliament's presidium, "A joint committee consisting of members from three committees, namely the Judicial and Legal Committee, the Cultural Committee, and

possibly the Social Committee, will be formed to discuss the details of this bill and its enactment.” He added that “the decision on the bill's passage into law will be made discreetly and without being presented in the open session of the parliament.”

The uprising that was sparked by the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini in September has made it increasingly **difficult for the clerical regime to enforce the mandatory Islamic dress code**. Since the beginning of the ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ movement, tens of thousands of girls and women have shed their compulsory hijab. To avoid the public backlash over the violent enforcement of hijab laws, the Islamic Republic has recently begun implementing a wide range of measures from public humiliation tactics to **using traffic cameras to identify women without hijab**.

An Iranian woman and her daughter without mandatory hijab on the streets of capital Tehran

The regime seeks to criminalize hijab defiance but no branch of government wants to be solely responsible for the complications of such an action in society. As debate over how to deal with women who refuse to observe compulsory hijab continues among the authorities, even the hijab or so-called morality police faces a similar reaction by the authorities as **they refuse to take responsibility**, perhaps due to concern over the upcoming elections.

Political sociologist Mohammad Rahbari says discussing the hijab bill behind closed doors means that “no one will take responsibility for this bill, neither the judiciary, nor the government, and not even the parliament.”

He believes that the fate of such “a law that none of its decision-making entities is willing to take responsibility for” will either not lead to tangible

actions or its implementation will be as opaque as the internet protection law. “The common point of both these bills is that many people oppose them, and that’s why members of the parliament do not have the courage to openly discuss them,” he noted.

Lawmaker Hassan Norouzi, a member of the Judicial and Legal Committee, was questioned by a reporter on Tuesday as to whether or not it was better that the people were aware of the details and processes of the hijab bill. He replied, “It has been transparent enough. This law is a matter of governance, and what concerns the people is to abide by it.”

He was asked again if the joint committee will share its final decisions with the public, to which he replied frankly, “No. It’s possible that media outlets may say something and the whole plan gets obliterated,” further undermining the credibility of the media in a country deemed one of the world’s worst for press freedom.

The "Hijab and Chastity" bill, which was sent to the Islamic Consultative Assembly by the administration of Ebrahim Raisi, initially comprised of only 15 articles. Now in its final days, it has 70 articles with its fate still in limbo.

Iran Protests



In Fear Of Backlash, Iran Hijab Bill Moves To Secret Talks



Fears Grow Over Missing Iranian Satirist