



An Iranian woman without mandatory hijab in front of Tehran's Azadi tower

Hijab Police Remains Holy Grail For Iran's Regime

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While updates about Iran's contentious new hijab bill are trickling out, a newspaper in Tehran says the so-called morality police is still the regime's preferred strategy.

Farhikhtegan newspaper, affiliated with Ali Akbar Velayati, a close advisor to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, said in an article published Saturday that a parliamentary committee in charge of the bill has eliminated the only possible benefit of the bill aimed at reducing police confrontations with people.

The main idea of the bill was to introduce a new way for hijab enforcement in the streets that would not lead to violent confrontation between police and people, reminiscent of the death of Mahsa Amini that ignited nationwide protests last September, shaking the foundations of the clerical regime. It put the emphasis on non-policing measures, rather than hijab patrols who confront the people on the streets.

The bill, which was sent to the Islamic Consultative Assembly by the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi, initially was comprised of only 15 articles. Now undergoing its final deliberations, it has become more unwieldy with 70 articles while the parliament has decided to discuss it without an open session in fear of further backlash.

An Iranian woman without mandatory hijab in Tehran

According to lawmaker Ahmad Naderi, a member of the parliament's presidium, a joint committee will make “the decision on the bill's passage into law **discreetly and without being presented in the open session of the parliament.**”

“The bill, fraught with suspicions and flaws both from a legal and societal perspective, has become a topic of national discussion,” said Farhikhtegan daily. “Now even more alarming news is being heard,” added the paper, explaining that lawmaker Amirhossein Bankipour has made the hijab patrols by police as the only viable option to crush the civil disobedience movement

that is translated into society as women unveiling in public. “This means going back to square one,” said the article.

The uprising last 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. The regime seeks to criminalize hijab defiance, but no branch of the government wants to be solely responsible for complications and the risk of social backlash.

Iranian women without mandatory hijab in Esfahan (Isfahan)

According to Farhikhtegan newspaper, the bill has evolved to the point where instead of rectifying the existing issues, its new addendums will further exacerbate the situation.

In recent weeks, the **regime has intensified measures to intimidate people** against defying hijab such as shutting down restaurants, cafes, small businesses and even online shops. The regime has also summoned students and has moved to make university lectures online in fear of renewed protests. However, the common belief is still the same: Regime cannot retain control of women’s dress code on streets.

Veteran hardliner lawmaker Hossein-Ali Haji-Deligani said that to keep its head above water, the regime must act promptly. “Every day, the situation worsens, thus requiring preventive actions; otherwise, we risk entering irrecoverable

circumstances. Due to inaction, defiance against hijab has deteriorated further, and if we don't stop its progress, it will sweep us away," he said, justifying the haste and secrecy in finalizing the hijab bill.

Responding to Haji-Deligani, political analyst Ali-Hossein Ghazizadeh said, "The regime is rushing to secretly approve the bill. This bill represents the last arrow in the quiver of the regime to confront the women who have come to make history. Mark my word! This bill does not work; the flood that has been unleashed will sweep you all away," he said in a tweet.

Reformist activist Saeed Shariati quipped on a television debate earlier in the week that it is not "religious minorities" but the "irreligious majority" who do not adhere to the regime's interpretation of Islamic laws.

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