Leaked Iran hijab documents call for mobile courts and jail terms for celebrities - BBC News





Menu

World | Africa | Asia | Australia | Europe | Latin America | Middle East | US & Canada

ADVERTISEMENT

Leaked Iran hijab documents call for mobile courts and jail terms for celebrities

🕓 6 days ago

2022 Iran protests



Many Iranian woman are openly defying the dress code by going out on to the streets without a hijab

By Farnoosh Amirshahi

"Highly confidential" documents obtained by BBC Persian outline how Iran's government is trying to crack down on women who do not wear a hijab.

Two documents from April and May reveal the judiciary could set up "mobile courts" in public places like shopping malls to punish dress code violations.

They also show schoolgirls could face action by the education ministry and that celebrities could be jailed for up to 10 years for "promoting corruption".

Iran's government has not commented.

However, an Iranian newspaper that published a short section of one of the directives has been charged with publishing classified documents.

And some of the directives were included in the controversial "Hijab and Chastity Bill" that is currently being reviewed by the Guardian Council watchdog before becoming law.

- Iran's defiant women: 'I wear what I like now'
- Iran women defy car confiscation threat over hijabs
- A really simple guide to Iran's protests

Iran's parliament passed the bill in September - a year after protests erupted over the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who was detained by morality police for allegedly not wearing her hijab properly.

Women burnt their headscarves or waved them in the air at the demonstrations against clerical rule, during which hundreds of people were reportedly killed in a brutal crackdown by security forces.

Although the unrest has subsided, a growing number of women and girls have stopped covering their hair in public altogether in open acts of defiance.

According to the leaked documents, Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi approved a series of directives aimed at coordinating action by the government and other entities to address the issue of women not covering their hair in public several months before parliament began debating the hijab bill in secret.

Security services - including the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) intelligence service, the ministry of intelligence, and the Security Police - were granted extensive powers to implement those directives, they show.

Some of the directives state that:

- Police should "prepare the necessary documentation regarding schoolgirls who unveil" so that appropriate action can be taken through the education ministry
- Celebrities, influencers and bloggers who do not cover their hair, or who "encourage unveiling" on social media, should face the charge of "promoting corruption", which is punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Officers will also be able to enter their homes and seize their computers and mobile phones

- Officers can seal or shut down without permission any shops or other businesses not complying with the hijab regulations, and that any customers who violate them should be denied services, forced to leave, or handed over to the judiciary
- Cafes considered "corrupting centres" because of the role they played in last year's protests should be shut down, particularly those near schools and universities
- Officers are authorised to initiate legal proceedings against women who resist warnings to cover their hair on charges including "promoting corruption"
- There is a need for a national database of "motorcycle number plate bank" so those carrying female drivers or passengers with uncovered hair can be identified
- Monitoring should be increased of companies whose employees "violate dress codes provocatively and immodestly during entry, exit, and within the premises"

A significant portion of the directives in the leaked documents has already been implemented, including setting up hijab enforcement units inside metro stations and other public spaces; impounding cars that transport unveiled women; denying services to women violating the dress code; and closing cafes.

According to the documents, the police force is required to assign a sufficient number of officers to "identify and warn women who have unveiled themselves", and that in areas where there is sufficient manpower IRGC personnel will help carry out the task.

1-11/11 استاندازان محترم سراسی کشور. با سلام و احترام: ينهرو الملاغ نامه «٠٠٠٩٠٠ ٢٢١/٠٠٠٠ مورخ ٢/٢/١٩ ٠ ٢ رياست. محترم قوه فضائيه و يبوه جلسه ستاد ممفاة حجابه مورخ ١٨١٢ ٢٢ ٦٤ به رياسي جنانو أقاى دكتر وحديدي فزير محترم كشور ويا حضور

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi approved the directives included on two documents marked as "highly confidential"

In the past few months Iranians have noticed the presence of hijab enforcers at metro stations across the capital, Tehran.

The interior ministry and Tehran municipality have described them as "selfmotivated forces that do not require a licence for their activities".

But the documents show that their presence is the result of a government decision, which has required planning and the allocation of resources.

The documents also emphasise the importance of "extensively filming and documenting the identity of those involved in unveiling", and indicate that hijab enforcers filming women and girls are affiliated to the security services.

Related Topics

Iran Mahsa Amini Islamic veils 2022 Iran protests

More on this story



Jailed Iranian activist's twins accept her Nobel Prize

11 December



Iran secretly executes man over protests - sources 23 November



Iranian women face 10 years' jail under hijab bill

20 September



https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67771532