

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Outlawing the Burka: Europe

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- ❖ In 2010, French President Nicolas Sarkozy passed legislation outlawing any clothing that conceals the face, including the burka. Anyone caught doing so can be subjected to a 150 Euro fine.¹
- ❖ Following the passing of French legislation in 2011, protests broke out in Paris, and further protests took place around the French embassy in London.²
- ❖ In 2011, the European Court of Human Rights upheld France's 2010 ban on the burka, stating that the law did not infringe on religious freedom, but instead "aimed to ensure 'respect for the minimum set of values of an open democratic society' ".³
- ❖ After the European Court of Human Rights upheld the 2010 French ban on the Burka, Amnesty International called upon "all relevant authorities to overturn such discriminatory bans".⁴
- ❖ In 2011, the Belgian government passed similar legislation as France, which many politicians claimed was liberating for women. Amnesty International however identified it as an "attack on religious freedom."⁵
- ❖ In 2011, Italy passed legislation that banned wearing the burka or anything that conceals the face in public spaces for "security reasons".⁶
- ❖ In 2013, the southern canton of Ticino, Switzerland approved a ban on full face veils. Results show that nearly 65% of the electorate supported such a ban.⁷
- ❖ In 2014, councilors in the Spanish region of Catalonia passed legislation banning the burqa and other face coverings in public spaces.⁸
- ❖ In 2015, the Dutch cabinet approved legislation approving a "partial ban" on the wearing of face veils, including in hospitals, schools, and public transportation.⁹

¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28106900>

² <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1375654/France-burka-ban-Two-arrested-Paris-protest.html>

³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/01/us-france-burqa-idUSKBN0F63VH20140701>

⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/07/european-court-ruling-full-face-veils-punishes-women-expressing-their-religion/>

⁵ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/belgium-passes-europes-first-ban-on-wearing-burka-in-public-1959626.html>

⁶ <http://muslimvoices.org/france-belgium-italy-votes-ban-burgas/>

⁷ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/sep/23/italian-speaking-swiss-region-bans-full-face-musli/>

⁸ <http://www.newsweek.com/2014/08/08/catalonia-board-burqa-ban-bandwagon-262118.html>

⁹ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/netherlands-niqab-ban-partial-150522144420609.html>