

Muslim women protest on first day of France's face veil ban

Level 1 • Elementary

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

ban	headscarf	Islamophobia	visible	arrest
niqab	fine	plainclothes	burqa	protest

- If you _____ about something, you disagree strongly with it and take action in public. (headline)
- A _____ is a long headscarf worn by some Muslim women that covers the head and most of the face, revealing only the eyes. (para 1)
- A _____ is a piece of cloth that a woman wears over her head and ties under her chin. (para 1)
- If the police _____ someone, they take them to a police station because they believe he or she has committed a crime. (para 3)
- A _____ policeman does not wear a uniform but wears ordinary clothes. (para 3)
- If the authorities _____ something, they say officially that people must not do it. (para 5)
- _____ is an illogical fear of the Islamic religion or Muslims. (para 5)
- A _____ is an amount of money you have to pay if you have broken the law. (para 6)
- A _____ is a garment worn by some Muslim women that covers the whole body, head and face with just a small hole or grid for the eyes. (para 8)
- If someone is _____, you can see them. (para 9)

2 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

- Where is Notre Dame cathedral?
- How much will the fine for wearing a face covering be?
- How many women cover their faces in France?
- How many Muslims are there in France?
- Who is the President of France?
- When did the President say the burqa was not welcome in France?

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Angelique Chrisafis in Paris
11 April, 2011

- 1 Kenza Drider stood outside Notre Dame cathedral in Paris wearing a niqab, a headscarf covering her face and showing only her eyes. Large numbers of police watched as she and another woman protested peacefully for the right "to dress as they please". On the first day of France's ban on full Islamic face-coverings, this was the first test.
- 2 "I'm here to defend my civil liberties as a French citizen," said Drider, accompanied by around 10 supporters. Japanese tourists and Spanish schoolchildren took photos and TV crews filmed her protest. Then the police took action.
- 3 Drider was not stopped on her train journey to Paris. But while she was speaking to journalists at Notre Dame, she was arrested by plainclothes police. Then another woman in a niqab was arrested by a plainclothes officer and taken to a police bus. Police said they had not arrested the women because of their niqabs but because their protest was not authorised.
- 4 Under the new law, Muslim women cannot wear a full face-covering in public places in France, including when walking down the street, taking a train, going to hospital or collecting children from school. Women wearing a niqab will have to stay at home. They can wear a niqab inside a mosque or in a private car, but traffic police could stop them if they drive.
- 5 Halima, a 53-year-old mother who wears a headscarf, was arrested for protesting with the niqab-wearers at Notre Dame. She said: "This is the first time I've ever protested about anything. I'm not in favour of the niqab, I don't wear it myself. But it's wrong for the government to ban women from dressing how they want. Islamophobia is increasing in France. First it's the niqab ... next they will ban headscarves."
- 6 Women wearing a niqab in public could pay a €150 (£132) fine. Police are not allowed to remove face coverings in the street but they can take women to a police station to check their identity. The French government believes between 350 and 2,000 women cover their faces in France, out of a total Muslim population of between four and six million. Some women said they would continue to go out wearing niqabs and would go to the European court of human rights if they were stopped by police.
- 7 It is unlikely that owners of luxury clothes shops will call the police to arrest female tourists from the Gulf wearing niqabs. There might be different treatment for rich tourists and poor French people, said one shop-owner. A police union spokesman said the law would be "very difficult to apply".
- 8 There is a presidential election in France in 2012 and some people say that President Sarkozy is targeting Muslims to get more support from far-right voters. In 2009 he said the burqa was "not welcome in France" and some Muslim women say people have been ruder and more aggressive to them since then. Recently the French interior minister said the growing number of Muslims in France was a problem. Religious groups say that Islamophobia in France is like anti-Jewish feeling before the second world war.
- 9 France has a strict separation of church and state and in 2004 it banned headscarves and all religious symbols in schools. Samy Debah, head of the French Collective against Islamophobia, said that the government was using the niqab law to make Muslims less visible in public places.

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3 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make complete sentences.

1. The women who were protesting wanted ...
2. The French authorities have ...
3. Women can still wear a niqab ...
4. If they wear a niqab in a public place ...
5. Some people believe that ...
6. In 2004, the French authorities banned ...
- a. ... inside a private car.
- b. ... Islamophobia is increasing in France.
- c. ... they will have to pay a fine.
- d. ... the right to dress as they please.
- e. ... headscarves and religious symbols in schools.
- f. ... banned full face-coverings in public places.

4 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

1. human of European rights the court
2. the war before world second
3. to difficult very apply
4. 2,000 between and people 350
5. the is first time this
6. to her journey Paris train on

5 Two-word expressions

Match the words in the left-hand column with those in the right-hand column to make phrases from the text.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. plainclothes | a. election |
| 2. human | b. places |
| 3. public | c. rights |
| 4. police | d. journey |
| 5. presidential | e. station |
| 6. train | f. police |

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6 Prepositions

Complete the phrases using the prepositions below. Check your answers in the text.

between

to

from

by

down

in

1. walking _____ the street
2. collecting children _____ school
3. take someone _____ a police station
4. arrested _____ the police
5. _____ four and six million
6. _____ public places

7 Discussion

Do you agree with the ban on face coverings? Why? Why not?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. protest
2. niqab
3. headscarf
4. arrest
5. plainclothes
6. ban
7. Islamophobia
8. fine
9. burqa
10. visible

2 Find the information

1. Paris
2. €150
3. between 350 and 2,000
4. between four and six million
5. Sarkozy
6. 2009

3 Comprehension check

1. d
2. f
3. a
4. c
5. b
6. e

4 Chunks

1. the European court of human rights
2. before the second world war
3. very difficult to apply
4. between 350 and 2,000 people
5. this is the first time
6. on her train journey to Paris

5 Two-word expressions

1. f
2. c
3. b
4. e
5. a
6. d

6 Prepositions

1. down
2. from
3. to
4. by
5. between
6. in