



## Muslim Community in the Netherlands Unite in Last Attempt to Prevent Niqab Ban

In a last attempt to stop the approval of a partial niqab ban, the Muslim community in the Netherlands has begun a campaign entitled: #TegenNiqabverbod (translated against a veil ban). With this campaign the Muslim community are trying to stop the approval of the ban which will be finalized and decided upon by the Senate of the Dutch Parliament on the 17th of January.

An earlier attempt in 2012 to ban the niqab completely was postponed when the then centre-right government collapsed. Expectations within the Muslim community that attempts for a ban would seize under the new elected left wing government were quickly shattered when Minister Plasterk made meaningless changes to the ban but was adamant in continuing the process. The superficial changes which allowed women to wear the niqab when walking on the street but banning it in education and healthcare institutions, government buildings and on public transport were a pathetic attempt to fool the Muslim community into thinking that this wasn't a direct attack on the noble values of Islam.

With the making of this law, the Dutch government has shown yet again the great flaws and contradictions within its own secular framework. On the one hand they accuse Islam of being oppressive to women but on the other, they themselves make up a restrictive law denying woman the right to cover up.

But Alhamdulillah a large part of the Muslim community can see through the standard rhetoric and haven't been fooled by the arguments given by the government whether they are voiced by left or right wing parties. They know that this restrictive discriminative law has nothing to do with better communication and safety issues, and they realise that it is a direct attack on Islam and its symbols.

As part of the campaign, a statement was set up and signed by many different Muslim organisations and individuals in which the above concerns were expressed. It further stated that taking on this law, would indeed be oppressive for women who would decide to uphold their Islamic beliefs, making it impossible for her to take part in society without being forced to pay large fines and therefore forcing her into isolation. The statement proceeds to highlight the contradiction between this ban and the so-called claim of personal freedom. With this initiative the Muslim community urged the Senate to be objective when deciding on the implementation of this law and to acknowledge that this ban is indeed discriminatory.

When Muslim women are restricted in their obedience towards their Creator, the Muslim community must stand together in protecting her rights. Even when not all of us hold the opinion that wearing the veil is compulsory, we must understand that it is a valid Islamic opinion. We must also recognise that it is not the veil that is being attacked but the values of Islam itself. Therefore as Muslims we should unite against any attempt to undermine, demonise, or restrict our Islamic practices.

It is therefore a unique initiative for the Netherlands to see so many different Muslim organisations working together in protecting their Deen, Alhamdulillah. It shows the growing confidence that Muslims have in Islam and it demonstrates their vitality and strength when intellectually defending it.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said,

«إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ كَالْبُنْيَانِ يَشُدُّ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا وَشَبَكَ أَصَابِعَهُ»

**“Verily, the believers are like a structure, each one strengthening the other,” and the Prophet clasped his fingers together.** (Source: Sahih al-Bukhari 467, Sahih Muslim)

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