

Kyrgyzstan Bans Wearing Niqab and Calling to Islam

News:

President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov has approved legislative changes in the religious sphere, restricting the wearing of niqabs—Muslim garments that almost completely cover the face. On Tuesday, January 21, the official website of the Kyrgyz leader reported that he signed a bill prohibiting the wearing of clothing in public places that **"does not allow for the identification of a person"**.

Additionally, the amendments include a ban on **"converting followers of other faiths, religiously neutral individuals, and atheists to one's own religion"**, as well as conducting religious rituals in nursing homes, prisons, military units, and other institutions. The distribution of religious literature and other materials in educational institutions, public places, and during door-to-door visits is also prohibited.

Violation of any of these provisions carries a fine of 20,000 soms (approximately 220 euros). The Kyrgyz Parliament, the Jogorku Kenesh, supported the bill at the end of December 2024. Immediately after the law was passed, police began conducting raids in public places to identify women wearing niqabs.

Comment:

Let us recall that in Russia, discussions about adopting a law banning the wearing of the niqab in public places have been ongoing since last year, and the Muftiate of Dagestan even issued a fatwa declaring its wear impermissible. Moreover, concealing religious garments like the niqab and burqa are already banned in a number of European countries—such as Switzerland, France, Denmark, and The Netherlands.

It is clear that Sadyr Japarov is fulfilling his obligations to Russia, which he pledged to its overseer Dmitry Kozak when the latter arrived in Bishkek during the height of another revolution in 2020. After that, Japarov and his loyal ally Kamchybek Tashiev, whom he appointed head of the State Committee for National Security (GKNB), began implementing a plan to "restore order" in the country as Russia envisions it. This means establishing a dictatorship in the country, eliminating all pro-Western political forces, eradicating opposition as a phenomenon, shutting down media outlets not under government control, and launching harsh crackdowns on Islamic movements while imposing restrictions on Islam.

As we can see, unfortunately, Japarov has so far managed to successfully implement his plan—all amid the complete silence of the people. To achieve this, Japarov orchestrated a minor war with Tajikistan over disputed territories near the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. In doing so, he mobilized society by stirring up patriotic sentiments, and once public fervor reached the desired level, he declared every dissenter a traitor.

Thus, Kyrgyzstan, once a relatively safe haven for Muslims, is gradually turning into a second Uzbekistan, where repressive policies have been in place since the 1990s.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Muhammad Mansour**