

Danish parliament passes ban on burqa and niqab



From the Danish edition of [The Guardian](#)

A majority in Denmark's parliament has voted in favour of a ban on certain types of face-covering clothing in public, effectively banning the Islamic burqa and niqab from August 1st.

The Liberal, Conservative and Danish People's parties all voted in favour of the bill, as did the opposition Social Democrats with the exception of MP Mette Gjerskov, thereby securing the majority. In total, the bill received 75 votes in favour and 30 votes against. Some MPs were absent...

Violations of the anti-veil law will result in a 1,000 kroner (134 euros) fine for the first offence and up to 10,000 kroner for breaking the law for the fourth time or more.

The Danish People's Party (DF) had earlier this week presented an amendment to the proposal that would have provided for prison sentences.

But with no broader support for the harsher punishment, DF voted in favour of the existing form of the bill.

Justice Minister Søren Pape Poulsen has previously stated that

Danish police will not forcibly remove veils from women. "I do not want police officers pulling items of clothing off people – burqas or otherwise. That is not going to happen," Poulsen told Politiken last month. "If they live nearby, they will be asked to go home," Poulsen said at the time. A further option would be for women to be accompanied to a police station, where they would be collected by a family member,

...Poulsen, said it would be up to police officers to use their common sense when they see people violating the law, which comes into force on 1 August. The legislation allows people to cover their face when there is a "recognisable purpose" such as cold weather or complying with other legal requirements, for example using motorcycle helmets under Danish traffic rules.

The actual number of people who currently wear either the burqa or niqab in Denmark is not known precisely. The most recent figures come from 2010, when a government report estimated the number to be between 150 and 200 women, with the majority of these wearing the niqab, rather than the burqa. *This doesn't sound like many, but this bill should stop the numbers increasing at the rate, and to the extent that one sees these faceless women on the streets of the UK, even in small towns and suburbs.*