

Taliban says security forces will stop Afghan women from visiting popular national park

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The Taliban will use security forces to stop women from visiting one of Afghanistan's most popular national parks, according to information shared by a spokesman for the Vice and Virtue Ministry.

The ministry alleges that women have not been observing the proper way to wear the hijab, or Islamic headscarf, when going to Band-e-Amir in the central Bamiyan province.

This comes a week after the minister, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, visited the province and told officials and religious clerics that women haven't been adhering to the correct way of wearing the hijab, asking security personnel to stop women from visiting the tourist hotspot. "Going sightseeing is not a must for women," Hanafi said at the time.

Ministry spokesman Molvi Mohammad Sadiq Akif shared a report of Hanafi's remarks late Saturday night, including the use of

security forces, clerics and elders to carry out Hanafi's order. A recording of the minister's speech in Bamiyan, aligning with Akif's report, was shared on social media.

Band-e-Amir is a major tourist attraction in Bamiyan. It became the country's first national park in 2009 and pulls in thousands of visitors every year. It is a major source of income for locals and their sightseeing, restaurant, hotel and handicraft businesses.