

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

### Level 2 • Intermediate

#### 1 Key words

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

burqa	headscarf	convert	stigmatise	Islamophobia
boutique	niqab	veil	citizenship	fine

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a thin piece of cloth that women sometimes wear over their head and part of their face. (headline)
2. 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)
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a piece of cloth that a woman wears over her heard and ties under her chin. (para 5)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is an irrational fear of the Islamic religion or Muslims. (para 5)
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ is an amount of money you have to pay if you have broken the law. (para 6)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is the obligations and responsibilities that you have as a citizen. (para 6)
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who changes their religious beliefs. (para 6)
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a small fashionable shop, especially one that sells clothes. (para 7)
9. If you \_\_\_\_\_ a person or group of people, you treat their behaviour as wrong or embarrassing and try to make them feel ashamed. (para 8)
10. 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)

#### 2 Find the information

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

1. Who is the President of France?
2. How much will the fine for wearing a face covering be?
3. How many women cover their faces in France?
4. How many Muslims are there in France?
5. When did France introduce a law banning headscarves and religious symbols in schools?
6. Where is Notre Dame cathedral?

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Angelique Chrisafis in Paris  
11 April, 2011

- 1 Kenza Drider stood outside Notre Dame cathedral with her niqab showing only her eyes. Large numbers of police with a riot van and several lorries stood nearby 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 not here to provoke anyone, but to defend my civil liberties as a French citizen," said Drider, accompanied by around 10 supporters. Japanese tourists and Spanish schoolchildren fought their way through TV crews to take photos. Then the police took action.
- 3 Drider had not been stopped on her train journey into Paris. But as she spoke to journalists at Notre Dame, she was taken away by plainclothes police. Next a woman in a niqab in her 40s was grabbed by a plainclothes officer and taken to another police bus. Officers said the women had not been arrested for their niqabs but because their protest had not been authorised.
- 4 Under the law promoted by President Nicolas Sarkozy, any Muslim woman wearing a face veil is now banned from all public places in France, including when walking down the street, taking a train, going to hospital or collecting her children from school. Women in niqabs will be effectively under house arrest, allowed only inside a place of worship or a private car, although they could be stopped by traffic police if they drive. But several French police unions yesterday said that the law was almost impossible to enforce.
- 5 Halima, a 53-year-old mother who wears a headscarf, was arrested for standing silently with the niqab-wearers at Notre Dame. She said: "This is the first time I've ever protested over 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 ... then they will ban plain headscarves."
- 6 Women in face veils risk a €150 (£132) fine or citizenship lessons. Police cannot remove face coverings in the street by force but can order women to a police station to check their identity. The 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 niqab-wearers – many of them French converts – said they would continue to go out and would go to the European court of human rights if they were stopped by police. Others have moved abroad, while just one woman said she had permanently removed her face covering. Another niqab wearer said women she knew would wear medical face masks and say they were ill in order to get round the new law.
- 7 Shop-owners said luxury fashion boutiques were unlikely to call the police to arrest female tourists in niqabs from the Gulf. This would create a two-tier system between rich tourists and poor French people, one trader complained. Emmanuel Roux from the police union said the law would be "infinitely difficult to apply" and would not be applied much.
- 8 Sarkozy, who is facing a presidential election in 2012, has been accused of stigmatising Muslims to increase his support among far-right voters. In 2009 he said the burqa was "not welcome in France" and women in veils and head coverings say verbal abuse against them has increased since then. Recently the interior minister, Claude Gueant, said the growing number of Muslims in France was a problem. Religious groups have compared current Islamophobia in France to anti-Jewish feeling before the second world war.
- 9 France has a strict separation of church and state and banned headscarves and all religious symbols in schools in 2004. Samy Debah, head of the French Collective against Islamophobia,

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said: "The niqab law is just an excuse to reduce the visibility of Muslims in public spaces."

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### 3 Comprehension check

Are these statements true or false according to the text?

1. Headscarves may not now be worn in public in France.
2. Full-face coverings may not now be worn in public in France.
3. The police will make it a priority to stop women in full veils walking down the street.
4. Most Muslim women in France cover their faces in public.
5. Critics say that Sarkozy has introduced this law to try to win far-right votes.
6. A lot of women have removed their face coverings as a result of the new law.

### 4 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a two-word expression meaning *a special police vehicle used during demonstrations* (para 1)
2. a two-word expression meaning *police wearing ordinary clothes in order to do their job without being recognised* (para 3)
3. a three-word expression meaning *officially prevented from leaving your home, usually because you have committed a political crime* (para 4)
4. a three-word expression which is a general term for *church, mosque, temple and so on* (para 4)
5. a three-word expression meaning *supporting a particular idea* (para 5)
6. a two-word expression meaning *something you wear over your face to protect it* (para 6)
7. a three-word expression meaning *a system with two levels* (para 7)
8. a two-word expression meaning *rude or offensive words* (para 8)

### 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. civil        | a. veil      |
| 2. face         | b. election  |
| 3. human        | c. right     |
| 4. presidential | d. symbol    |
| 5. far          | e. liberties |
| 6. religious    | f. rights    |

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### 6 Word-building

Complete the table.

	verb	noun
1.	cover	(for example, a veil)
2.	arrest	
3.	elect	
4.	separate	
5.	abuse	
6.	support	(person)

### 7 Discussion

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

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#### KEY

##### 1 Key words

1. veil
2. niqab
3. headscarf
4. Islamophobia
5. fine
6. citizenship
7. convert
8. boutique
9. stigmatise
10. burqa

##### 2 Find the information

1. Nicolas Sarkozy
2. €150
3. between 350 and 2,000
4. between four and six million
5. 2004
6. Paris

##### 3 Comprehension check

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. T
6. F

##### 4 Find the word

1. riot van
2. plainclothes police
3. under house arrest
4. place of worship
5. in favour of
6. face mask
7. two-tier system
8. verbal abuse

##### 5 Two-word expressions

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

##### 6 Word-building

1. covering
2. arrest
3. election
4. separation
5. abuse
6. supporter