

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

### Level 3 • Advanced

#### 1 Key words

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

headscarf

defiantly

convert

stigmatise

Islamophobia

burqa

niqab

veil

jilbab

glimpse

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a thin piece of cloth that women sometimes wear over their face.
2. If you act \_\_\_\_\_, you refuse to obey a person or rule.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a long headscarf worn by some Muslim women that covers the head and most of the face, revealing only the eyes.
4. If you catch a \_\_\_\_\_ of something you only see it for a moment.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a piece of cloth that a woman wears over her head and ties under her chin.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is an irrational fear of the religion of Islam or Muslims.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a long, loose-fitting coat worn by some Muslim women.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who changes their religious beliefs.
9. If you \_\_\_\_\_ a person or group of people, you treat their behaviour as wrong or embarrassing and try to make them feel ashamed.
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.

#### 2 What do you know?

Decide whether these statements are true or false. Then check your answers by reading the text.

1. Notre Dame is a cathedral in Paris.
2. Nicholas Sarkozy is the French Prime Minister.
3. It is completely legal to wear a face-covering in public in France.
4. The Elysée palace is the official residence of the French president.
5. Religious symbols can be displayed freely in schools in France.
6. There is a strict separation between church and state in France.

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Angelique Chrisafis in Paris  
11 April, 2011

- 1 Kenza Drider stood defiantly outside Notre Dame cathedral, adjusting her niqab to reveal only a glimpse of her eyes. Scores of police with a riot van and several lorries stood by as she and another woman in a niqab staged a peaceful protest 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, but to defend my civil liberties as a French citizen," said Drider, a 32-year-old mother-of-four from Avignon, accompanied by around 10 supporters. Japanese tourists and Spanish schoolchildren fought their way through TV crews to get a picture of the spectacle. Then police swooped.
- 3 Drider had not been stopped on her train journey into Paris. But as she spoke to journalists at Notre Dame, she was led off by plainclothes police and driven away along with two protest organisers. Next a woman in a niqab in her 40s from a Paris suburb was grabbed by a plainclothes officer, who gripped her tightly and frog-marched her to another police bus. Officers said the women were not detained 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 risk being stopped by traffic police if they drive. But several French police unions yesterday warned that the law was almost impossible to enforce and that they would not make it a priority to stop women in full veils walking down the street.
- 5 Halima, a 53-year-old mother from Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, who wears a headscarf, was detained by police 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 on the rise in France. First it's the niqab, then they'll ban the jilbab, then it will be plain headscarves outlawed."
- 6 Rachid Nekkaz, a property developer and rights campaigner from the Paris suburbs, was detained outside the president's official residence, the Elysée palace, with a woman in a niqab. Nekkaz, who organised the Notre Dame protest, had offered to pay niqab wearers' fines for breaking the law. He said police had not wanted to formally caution the woman for wearing a niqab.
- 7 Women in face veils risk a €150 (£132) fine or citizenship lessons. Police cannot forcibly remove face coverings in the street but can order women to a police station to check their identity. The government estimates 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 – vowed to continue going out and to take their cases to the European court of human rights if stopped by police. Others have moved abroad, while just one woman told French papers she had permanently removed her face covering. Another niqab wearer said women she knew would wear bird-flu-style medical face masks and say they were ill in order to get round the law against covering your face.
- 8 Shop-owners said luxury fashion boutiques near the Champs Elysées were unlikely to call the police to detain 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 "infinitely little applied".

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9 Sarkozy, whose polls are at record lows with next year's presidential election looming, has been accused of stigmatising Muslims to boost his support among far-right voters. Since he declared in 2009 that the burqa was "not welcome in France", women in all forms of veils and head coverings said verbal abuse against them had increased. Recently the interior minister, Claude Gueant, suggested the growing number of Muslims in France was a problem. Religious groups have likened current Islamophobia in France to anti-Jewish feeling before the second world war.

10 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, said: "The niqab law is a pretext to reduce the visibility of Muslims in public spaces. It exposes an old French colonial reflex, that 'Arabs and blacks' only understand force and you can't talk to them."

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First published in *The Guardian*, 11/04/11

### 3 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

1. Which of these may not now be worn in public in France?
  - a. a headscarf
  - b. a full face veil
  - c. a jilbab
2. Why were the women protesting?
  - a. because they think all women should wear burqas
  - b. because they believe women should have the right to dress as they please
  - c. because they believe Nicolas Sarkozy is an Islamophobe
3. How have the police reacted to the new law?
  - a. They say it will be very difficult to enforce.
  - b. They say they will arrest anyone wearing a full face veil in public.
  - c. They say they will ignore it.
4. Why, according to his critics, has Sarkozy introduced this law now?
  - a. because he wants to create a two-tier system between rich tourists and poor French people
  - b. because France has a strict separation of church and state
  - c. because there is an election next year and he wants to increase his support among certain voters

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#### 4 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a two-word expression meaning *police wearing ordinary clothes in order to do their job without being recognised* (para 3)
2. a verb meaning *to force someone to walk somewhere with two people each holding one of their arms tightly* (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 verb meaning *to issue a formal warning* (para 6)
6. an adverb meaning *involving the use of force* (para 7)
7. a three-word expression meaning *a system with two levels* (para 8)
8. a two-word expression meaning *rude or offensive words* (para 9)

#### 5 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column.

- |            |                       |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. stage   | a. a law              |
| 2. defend  | b. someone's identity |
| 3. enforce | c. support            |
| 4. pay     | d. a protest          |
| 5. check   | e. a fine             |
| 6. boost   | f. civil liberties    |

#### 6 Word-building

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets at the end of each sentence.

1. Some people have remained \_\_\_\_\_ and say that they will not obey the new law. [DEFY]
2. The new law bans full-face \_\_\_\_\_. [COVER]
3. There is a \_\_\_\_\_ election next year. [PRESIDENT]
4. Owner of luxury boutiques are \_\_\_\_\_ to call the police to detain female tourists in niqabs. [LIKELY]
5. Critics say that women in niqabs will \_\_\_\_\_ be under house arrest. [EFFECTIVE]
6. One critic argued that the law was an excuse to reduce the \_\_\_\_\_ of Muslims in public places. [VISIBLE]

#### 7 Discussion

Should everyone be allowed to wear whatever he or she wants to wear, regardless of the effect on other people?

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#### KEY

##### 1 Key words

1. veil
2. defiantly
3. niqab
4. glimpse
5. headscarf
6. Islamophobia
7. jilbab
8. convert
9. stigmatise
10. burqa

##### 2 What do you know?

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

##### 3 Comprehension check

1. b
2. b
3. a
4. c

##### 4 Find the word

1. plainclothes police
2. frog-march
3. under house arrest
4. place of worship
5. caution
6. forcibly
7. two-tier system
8. verbal abuse

##### 5 Verb + noun collocations

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

##### 6 Word-building

1. defiant
2. coverings
3. presidential
4. unlikely
5. effectively
6. visibility