

Special Briefing

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Iran Wages War Against Women with Draconian New Hijab Law

Analysis and Full English
Translation by the Center for
Human Rights in Iran (CHRI)
of Iran's new "Law to Support
the Family by Promoting the
Culture of Chastity and Hijab

Iran Wages War Against Women with Draconian New Hijab Law

*Hijab Mandated in All Spheres of Life,
Cementing Gender Apartheid in Iran*

*Punishments Include Heavy Fines, Lashes,
Long Prison Sentences, and Execution*

*Citizens Turned Into Spies and Enforcers,
Paving Way for Vigilante Violence Against Women*

December 13, 2024—With the full text of the Islamic Republic’s new Law to Support the Family by Promoting the Culture of Chastity and Hijab finally released ([see CHRI’s full English translation](#)), its draconian punishments, mandated compliance in all spheres of life, and use of citizen informers and enforcers reveal the full extent of the government’s desperate and dangerous measures to re-assert its control over Iranian women, the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) said in a statement today.

That control was challenged during the 2022 Woman Life Freedom protests that roiled Iran, and by the continued refusal by many Iranian women to wear the hijab, which they see as the preeminent symbol of the Islamic Republic’s repressive and discriminatory treatment of women.

This law, approved by Iran’s Guardian Council in October and submitted to the government for implementation in December, is the Islamic Republic’s answer to their challenge: it will wage war on the women of Iran in every corner of public life: fining, firing, lashing, and imprisoning women—and their supporters—who refuse to submit. The new law even mandates the death penalty for certain hijab-related offenses.

“The repressive control that Iran’s new hijab law imposes on women in all spheres of life—social, political, economic, and financial—means the Islamic Republic has fully embraced a system that goes beyond gender discrimination, it is [gender apartheid](#),” said Hadi Ghaemi, CHRI executive director. “The international community should recognize this and condemn it as such.”

“Iran’s hijab law is not only an extreme violation of women’s rights, it will also create the conditions for grave violence against women,” Ghaemi said. “Its scope is so wide that the government is relying on citizen enforcers to ensure compliance, which is a set-up for vigilante violence against the women of Iran.”

The law stipulates draconian punishments for noncompliance with the mandatory hijab, including:

- Onerous fines that increase with subsequent offenses
- Lashes
- Lengthy prison sentences
- Loss of employment
- Exclusion from higher education
- Loss of access to essential government and business services
- Closure of businesses or organizations and firing of managers
- Execution, if the offense includes spreading “corruption and prostitution” on a large scale. (Anti-hijab activists have previously been prosecuted under prostitution charges.)

In addition to requiring intensified electronic surveillance in all public spaces to identify violators, the law also seeks to turn citizens into spies. It requires everyone, from cab drivers to business owners to civil servants and managers, to monitor and inform on women who are not complying with the forced hijab—or risk being punished themselves. It requires students and teachers to be judged by their hijab compliance, not by their performance. Cultural figures in the arts and sport and social influencers who challenge compliance are harshly punished.

Perhaps most dangerously, its use of civilian enforcement will encourage vigilante violence. Women in Iran who reject the hijab or other measures of gender control are already subjected to brutal violence—by the police and interrogators in detention centers, by Basij militia members who infiltrate peaceful protests, and by male family members who believe women have “dishonored” them. This law gives a free hand to vigilantes to act with impunity against women challenging forced hijab, under the pretext of encouraging law enforcement. It explicitly states in Article 59 that such enforcers cannot be “held accountable for carrying out an obligation under Sharia.”

“The hijab law is desperate in its scope, trying to turn citizen against citizen in the face of widespread societal rejection in Iran of mandatory hijab and the repressive control of women,” said Ghaemi, “but it will only widen the gulf between state and society in Iran.”

While some government officials, clearly fearful of the societal reaction to this oppressive law, are still debating its implementation, the hijab law is now the law of the land in Iran. It directly contradicts earlier pledges by administration officials—including by Iranian president Masoud Pezeshkian—to end arrests for hijab noncompliance. It is also a profound violation of Iran’s obligations under the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#).

CHRI calls on the UN and all Member States to urgently:

- **Publicly and forcefully condemn this deeply discriminatory law**, which is in blatant violation of Iran's [obligations under international law](#);
- **Demand that Iran rescinds this legislation** and cease its mandatory hijab policies, which are [inherently discriminatory and violate women's rights](#);
- **Drop all charges and release all individuals** who have been [punished or imprisoned](#) for defying or protesting against the country's mandatory dress code;
- **Support the codification of gender apartheid** in the proposed [Crimes Against Humanity treaty](#).

Full English Translation of the Hijab Law

A PDF of the full English translation by CHRI of the Islamic Republic of Iran's new hijab law can be accessed [here](#).

Lawyer: “All the provisions of this law severely contravene fundamental principles”

Saeid Dehghan, a prominent human rights lawyer and Director of the [Parsi Law Collective](#), offered these comments on the law:

“The definitions of criminal conduct in the hijab law's articles are extremely broad, providing huge discretion to security-focused judges. For example, Article 38 states that a person who ‘performs any behavior that is typically considered to be promoting [hijab removal]’ is subject to severe fines, bans on leaving the country, and if repeated, as much as two to five years’ imprisonment.

“The law's financial penalties, with its escalating fines for repeat offenses, are intended to drain the financial resources of those who oppose mandatory hijab laws, discouraging them from continuing this form of civil disobedience.

“The charge ‘corruption on earth’ is extraordinarily dangerous in the Islamic Republic, because it carries the death penalty. This hijab law not only stipulates lengthy prison sentences for those persistently opposing mandatory hijab and encouraging others to do so, in cases where such

actions lead to ‘widespread corruption’ the punishment is escalated to execution under the ‘corruption on earth’ charge.

“Nearly all the provisions of this law severely contravene fundamental principles, such as Article 9 of the Iranian constitution, which prohibits legislation that undermines citizens’ freedoms even in the name of national sovereignty. In addition, it violates the principle of individual accountability, as the law imposes penalties on individuals for the actions of others. It also imposes disproportionate penalties; citizens opposing mandatory hijab can be sentenced to long imprisonment or even execution, which are grossly disproportionate to their actions.”

Key Provisions of the New Hijab Law

Below are some of the hijab law’s key provisions, with monetary fines based on amounts that were set by the Iranian government in June 2024, which are subject to changes according to the country’s inflation rate.

The highlighted articles are presented in the order of the law’s articles, and not in the severity of the punishments. CHRI has not provided US dollar amounts, as the conversion rate continuously changes over time. For USD amounts at the time of this December 13, 2024 writing, the conversion rate is 72,900 tomans per USD.

- Article 1 equates removing the hijab with nudity and indecency and defines “immodesty” in vague and subjective terms that can be applied arbitrarily, noting that it can refer to “any type of behavior, speech, and sensual movements that violate Islamic law.”
- The clothing and fashion industry (Art. 5), the film and television production industries, the advertising industry, and the book publishing industry (Art. 7-2), and other industries must all strictly conform to the law.
- Teachers will be selected on the basis of their observance of hijab (Art. 10-4)
- Hijab compliance will be “key” in selecting students to universities (Art. 11-7 and 12-5)
- Licenses of organizations and NGOs that promote removal of the hijab will be revoked, and managers or board members who do not comply will be dismissed. (Art. 14-7)
- Public spaces, including parks and public transportation, will be continuously monitored. (Art. 17-8)
- Licenses of athletic organizations and public associations that “encourage the removal of the hijab” will be revoked. (Art. 19-4)

- The police will strengthen “smart systems” to identify “perpetrators” using tools such as fixed and mobile cameras and artificial intelligence. (Art. 29-1)
- The police will employ “trusted personnel” in the “streets, public places, businesses, vehicles and cyberspace” to report violators; the only requirements of these “personnel” are that they be married Muslims committed to the Islamic Republic. (This will promote vigilante violence.) (Art. 29-3)
- Anyone cooperating with governments, media, or foreign groups or individuals in promoting hijab removal will be sentenced to 5 to 10 years’ imprisonment and fined from 330 million to 500 million tomans, unless the crime falls under Article 286 of Iran’s Islamic Penal Code, which includes spreading corruption and prostitution on a large scale and other offenses that are considered “corruption on earth” and thus punishable by death. (Prominent anti-hijab activists have previously been [prosecuted under manufactured prostitution charges.](#)) (Art. 37)
- Anyone sending audio, video, content or photos to foreign governments, media, groups or individuals will be sent to prison for 2 to 5 years and fined 165 million to 330 million tomans. (Art. 37, Note 4)
- Owners of virtual and non-virtual businesses promoting hijab removal will be fined 330 million to 500 million tomans (about 8 to 12 times the monthly salary of a skilled worker in Tehran) or payment of two months of the annual income of the business, whichever is greater, and banned from leaving the country for up to two years. (Art. 40)
- Anyone who has “fame” (e.g. an artist, athlete, or other influential figure) or is a “social influencer” who violates the hijab law in real or cyberspace will be sentenced to the punishment prescribed for the crime committed, plus fined from 500 million tomans up to 920 million tomans. If repeated, the fine can double. They will also be banned from professional activities for up to six months, banned from leaving the country for up to two years, and banned from online activities for two years. (Punishments increase in subsequent cases.) (Art. 42)
- Any person (male or female) in public with immodest clothing, in real or virtual spaces, will be fined 6.7 million tomans. In a second instance, in addition to the first fine, an additional fine of 120,000 tomans will be imposed. In the third instance, a fine of 20 million to 80 million tomans will be imposed, and in the fourth instance, a fine of 80 million to 165 million tomans. After four times, they can be sentenced to two to five years in prison. (Art. 48)
- Any person (male or female) who appears in real or virtual public spaces “in nudity or in clothing considered nudity” (the law equates hijab removal with nudity) will be immediately arrested and sentenced to imprisonment from 5 to 10 years or fined from 330 million tomans up to 500 million tomans. In the event of a repeat offense, the penalties are increased. (Art. 49)

- Any woman who uncovers her hijab in public, including online, in the first instance will be fined 5 million tomans. For a second offense, an additional 10 million tomans fine will be imposed. In a third instance, she will be fined 20 million to 80 million tomans, and in a fourth instance she will be fined 80 million to 165 million tomans. After four times, she will be sentenced to a fine of more than 920 million tomans, confiscation of all her properties, and dissolution of her legal entities. (Art. 50)
- Cars whose driver or passengers do not comply with hijab will be fined 1.7 million tomans. (Art. 54)
- Taxis must incorporate systems that allow drivers to report passengers who violate the hijab law. Only if the driver reports a passenger violating the law to the police, will they be exempt from paying the fine. (Art. 54, Note 2)
- Managers of transportation companies must equip all vehicles under their management with surveillance tools. (Art. 55)
- Failure to pay any fines will result in denial of the following services: passport issuance/ replacement; car license plate services; permits to exit the country; release of impounded vehicles; issuance or replacement of a driver's license. (Art. 56, Note 1)
- If a fine cannot be collected, the convicted person will be prevented from accessing their banking services. (Art. 56, Note 4)
- Any person who “harasses” women wearing the hijab in public will be sentenced to two to six months’ imprisonment and up to 74 lashes.” (Art. 58)
- Regarding citizen enforcers who “encourage good and forbid evil,” the law states “no one can be held accountable for carrying out an obligation under Sharia,” thereby giving vigilantes immunity for their actions against women. (Art. 59)
- All government agencies and persons providing services to the public, such as banks or transportation companies, business owners and local officials, must provide the images of their cameras to the police in order to identify violators. (Art. 64)
- Anyone who sells clothes not in compliance with the law, will be sentenced to up to 2 months in prison and 74 lashes. (Art. 67)

Even Some Islamic Republic Leaders Speak Out Against Law

The new law has not been without its critics amongst the official establishment and the clerical elite in Iran. For example:

Ayatollah Mostafa Mohaghegh-Damad, the head of the Islamic Studies Group at the Academy of Sciences of Iran, [wrote](#) to the country’s senior Shia theologians on December 2, 2024:

“Many articles of this law are not only unenforceable but will also have the opposite effect in terms of effectiveness in the sacred matter of chastity and proper hijab, and will even cause hatred of religious teachings among the younger generation and the unwanted abandonment of the Islamic homeland by some compatriots. In meetings with government officials, the country’s senior authorities have repeatedly reminded us that the issue of hijab should be pursued through cultural means, not by sticks and whips...”

Masoumeh Ebtekar, Iran’s former vice president for women and family affairs, said in an [interview](#) on December 2, 2024:

“This entire law is about criminalization [of women]. ...For forty-four years, you have seen this method has not worked and only gotten worse, and it has had, and will continue to have, very serious consequences for the country, the state, and society. You still want to repeat this mistake and you think you can solve problems through coercion and force.”

Alireza Amani, head of the Iranian Bar Association in Gilan province, [said](#) on December 3, 2024:

“This law was drafted behind closed doors. In the process of passing it, its supporters have tried to expose not only society, but also the judiciary and government, to a phenomenon in which they had no role or vote.... Such a law, at least in its current form, has no support except for the few people who have approved it...”

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [said](#) in an interview on December 2, 2024:

“There are too many questions about the enforcement [of the hijab law] for me, who must implement it... Will society accept this? ... We must not do something that will cause discontent ...An unjust law will not be enforced, and if it is, it will create discontent.”

The International Community Must Support Iran’s Women

“The subjugation of women is at the heart of the Islamic Republic’s governance. Yet despite relentless violence and punishment by the authorities, women in Iran [continue to resist](#) the Islamic Republic’s systemic discrimination and repression,” Ghaemi said.

“Governments worldwide must demand the repeal of this hijab law. As the international community considers resuming negotiations with Iran, the human rights crisis in Iran—and in particular, its deeply repressive and discriminatory treatment of women—must be equally prioritized and addressed in parallel with other issues,” Ghaemi added.

For interviews or questions, please contact our Media Department at
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About us

Founded in 2008, the **Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI)** is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that works to protect and promote human rights in Iran. Headquartered in New York City, the Center researches and documents human rights violations throughout Iran, and provides governments, the U.N., think tanks, global media, and research centers around the world with detailed information, analysis and policy recommendations. The Center's approach is strictly nonpartisan; we operate within the framework of international human rights law.

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