

# Where in the world are the burka and niqab banned?

CALLS to ban the burka and niqab have reignited the debate over Islamic face veils in the UK. But which countries already have bans?

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The niqab covers the head and face, but leaves the eyes exposed

In a shock u-turn, German Chancellor Angela Merkel is now calling for a burka ban wherever legally possible for the "good of Germany".

In a speech on Monday December 6, Mrs Merkel: "Show your face. The full covering is not permissible and should be banned."

Ukip has long [called for a ban Islamic full face veils in Britain](#) and has pointed to laws that exist in other European countries.

The UK does not have a ban on Islamic dress but schools can decide their own dress code and prevent students from wearing face veils.

Here is an overview of countries that have banned the burka, which completely covers the body, and the niqab, which covers the head and face.

## The Netherlands

[MPs in the Netherlands have voted to ban the burka](#) on public transport and in places such as government buildings, schools and hospitals.

The Dutch cabinet approved [plans to ban the full face Islamic veil](#) last year but the legislation still needs to be approved by the Senate.

The ban does not completely outlaw the veil in public, but forbids it in "specific situations where it is essential for people to be seen" or for security reasons.



A guide to different types of Islamic dress

## France

France was the first country in Europe to ban Islamic face veils, such as the burka and the niqab, in public places.

The controversial ban took effect in April 2011 and made it illegal for Muslim women to leave their homes with their faces covered.

Women can be fined for wearing a face veil, while anyone who uses threats and violence to force a woman to wear a veil risks a €30,000 fine and a year in prison.

In July 2014 the European Court of Human Rights upheld the ban. A number of French seaside towns have now also [banned the burkini](#).

## Belgium

Belgium was the second European country after France to introduce a ban on full face veils, which outlawed the burka and niqab in public areas.

Women who cover their faces in public places like streets and parks can be fined and sentenced to up to seven days in jail. The ban came into effect in July 2011.

## Bulgaria



Getty images: Women in Muslim dress look at Tower Bridge in London

[Bulgaria's parliament banned the burka](#) in September 2016 in a bid to boost security in the wake of Islamist militant attacks in Europe.

The new law, which bans women from wearing full-face veils in public, was driven by Bulgaria's nationalist Patriotic Front coalition.

The party's co-leader Krasimir Karakachanov highlighted the security rationale, adding: "The burqa is more a uniform than a religious symbol".

## Egypt

The Egyptian government has drafted a [bill to ban the niqab and burka](#) in public places and government institutions.

The legislation comes after Egypt's Cairo University banned academic staff from wearing the niqab in classrooms to make it easier to communicate with students.

## Switzerland

A majority of the electorate in the Swiss region of Ticino [voted in favour of a ban on face veils](#) in public areas in 2013.

The [ban came into force](#) in 2016. Muslim women who wear the veil in shops, restaurants or public buildings can be fined up to €9,200 (£7,890).

## Italy

Lombardy, the wealthiest region in Italy, approved a [ban on women wearing the burka](#) in hospitals and local government buildings in December 2015.

It was the first time an Italian region explicitly outlawed Islamic face coverings. Existing laws already prohibit helmets and clothing that make identification difficult in public.

## Chad

Chad banned women from wearing the full-face veil following two suicide bomb attacks in June 2015. There are similar bans in parts of Cameroon and Niger as well as Congo-Brazzaville and the Gabon.

### ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW:

1. What are burkas and niqabs AND what type of people are more likely to wear them?
2. What are three reasons mentioned in the article explaining WHY some countries are banning burkas and niqabs?
3. Do you think other countries should ban Islamic face veils? (burkas and niqabs) Explain why or why not.
4. Do you think the U.S. should ever ban Islamic face veils? (burkas and niqabs) Explain why or why not using evidence.