

# *Burqa ban in the Netherlands imposed with little support*

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Amsterdam, August 4 (RHC)-- The prohibition of using burqas in public spaces, designed to target some 200 women who use the face-covering garments, has come into force in the Netherlands even though numerous public institutions and officials, including police, have stated they will not apply it.

The law targets the burqa (a veil that covers the entire face with a grid at eye level) and the niqab (which only exposes the eyes) and those who use a full-face helmet or balaclavas in public transports and buildings, such as schools, government offices and hospitals.

Rights groups have said that the law was unnecessary, and islamophobic, as only 200 to 400 women in the Netherlands wear a burqa or niqab, making it improbable that they would pose a big enough problem for schools, hospitals and public transport to merit a law.

"The consequences of the burqa-ban by a government will create more damage than it will give solutions and social cohesion in society," Said Bouharrou, vice president of the National Council of Moroccan Mosques in the Netherlands, told Efe.

In the multicultural neighborhood of Schilderswijk, in The Hague, a group of five Muslim women — who refuse to share their names — declare themselves against the use of the Islamic garment that hides the face. However, they told Efe they condemned the ban because they considered it to have "a racist base

that targets the Muslim community."

Measures against the wearing of Islamic veils have already been taken in Belgium, France, Denmark and Spain, among others.

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