

Russia's Dagestan Temporarily Bans Niqabs After Deadly Attacks

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A senior Muslim cleric in Russia's republic of Dagestan [announced](#) Wednesday that the niqab, a full-face veil worn by some Muslim women, would be temporarily banned as part of safety measures following deadly attacks last month.

Gunmen killed 22 people in coordinated attacks on two churches, two synagogues and a police checkpoint in two cities in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan on June 23.

Reports that one of the gunmen had planned to [escape](#) by wearing a niqab have triggered a high-profile debate on prohibiting the full-length garment in the region.

"The mufti announces a temporary ban on wearing niqabs until the identified threats are eliminated," Dagestan's deputy mufti Abdullah Salimov said in a statement.

Related article: [Dagestan Church and Synagogue Attack Toll Hits 22](#)

He said the ban was issued based on a recommendation from Dagestan's administration regarding "reports on the existing threat to the security of the population of the republic."

Dagestan's senior Muslim cleric Akhmed Abdulayev had vowed to issue a religious decree, or fatwa, to [ban](#) the wearing of the niqab. He said the ruling would be in effect until "peace and calm were restored to the region" and urged men who did not want their wives' faces seen in public to keep them at home.

Russia has had a conflicted relationship with allowing Muslim girls and women to wear headscarves even before the June 23 attacks.

Many Muslim women cover their heads in public with veils as a sign of modesty, but some critics see it as a sign of female oppression.

An estimated 20 million Muslims live in Russia, making up the country's second-largest religious minority and comprising about 14% of the overall population.

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