



AS IT IS

Iran Closing Businesses Not Following Hijab Law

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Iranian officials have been shutting down businesses that they say violate the law requiring women to wear head covers called hijabs.

Ali Akbar Javidan is the police commander of Kermanshah Province. He said the Public Places Supervision Department, along with other agencies, has begun enforcing “the **chastity** and hijab plan.”

Javidan said 45 businesses were closed after ignoring warnings to follow the hijab law.

Iran recently launched a new **surveillance** program for enforcing that law.

Many women in Iran have publicly opposed the law since the death last September of Mahsa Amini. The 22-year-old Kurdish woman died while in police detention. She had been arrested for not wearing the head cover. Her death led to nationwide protests.

Security forces violently suppressed the demonstrations. A report by the Human Rights Activists News Agency in early January found that 516 protesters have been killed, including 70 children.

The U.S.-based group said about 19,200 people also were arrested, including almost 700 students.

Homayoun Katouzian is an Iranian studies professor at Oxford University. He criticized Iran's law requiring the hijab in an **interview** with VOA.

"When prayer and fasting are not **compulsory**, and there is no crime for not doing them, why should the hijab be compulsory?"

Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi has threatened those who do not follow the law with "deprivation of public services." The minister formerly served as commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

I'm Caty Weaver.

Dan Novak adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on reporting by the VOA Persian Service.

Words in This Story

mandatory — *adj.* required by a law or rule

chastity — *n.* the state of being morally pure or decent

surveillance — *n.* the act of carefully watching someone or something especially in order to prevent or detect a crime

compulsory — *adj.* required by a law or rule

deprivation — *n.* the state of not having something that people need