



The Hijab Ban in Azerbaijan:

The Perils of Secularism to the Muslim Ummah

Azerbaijan, a Muslim-majority country, has recently sparked widespread controversy following reports that Hijab-wearing students and teachers were barred from entering school premises due to the enforcement of new uniform regulations in September 2026. Under the guise of upholding secular education, the Azerbaijani government asserts that these regulations do not target Islam; rather, they serve to enforce educational legislation, preserve the secular character of educational institutions, prevent the political exploitation of religion, and safeguard public order against extremist tendencies.

The events unfolding in Azerbaijan do not constitute an isolated or standalone development. Attacks on Islam, including the prohibition of the Hijab (headscarves) by Western countries, exert a profound influence on Muslim lands – particularly upon secular rulers who perpetually seek avenues to demonstrate their allegiance and alignment with the West.

While Hijab bans imposed by numerous Western nations come as no surprise given the reality of their antipathy toward Islam, it is entirely incomprehensible from any logical standpoint when a nation whose leadership professes Islam – and whose population is over 96% Muslim, such as Azerbaijan – acts to prohibit the wearing of the Hijab in schools.

In Islam, the Hijab is neither merely a garment, a cultural symbol, nor a matter of personal discretion. For a Muslim woman, wearing it constitutes an explicit religious obligation, an act of obedience, and devotion to Allah (swt). Beyond that, the Hijab stands as an emblem of honor and dignity for the Muslim woman. This honor and dignity must not only be preserved by the individual woman herself, but it is also imperatively incumbent upon the society and, most crucially, upon the state to safeguard it.

The Hijab serves as a cover for a woman's Awrah (prohibited parts), and Islam meticulously protects a woman's Awrah as a means of honoring women. No compromise can be afforded to anyone who attempts to degrade the honor or dignity of women by compelling them to uncover their Hijab. This principle was unequivocally demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (saw) when the Awrah of a Muslim woman was violated by a Jewish man in the marketplace of Banu Qaynuqa'.

The incident occurred when a Muslim woman was seated at a jeweler's shop belonging to a Jewish merchant. Suddenly, a Jewish man crept behind her surreptitiously and fastened the hem of her garment to her upper clothing. Consequently, when she stood up, her Awrah was exposed. The Jewish bystanders erupted into mocking laughter, ridiculing the Muslim woman.

A Muslim man who happened to witness the incident was overcome with outrage and struck the Jewish perpetrator dead. This act incited the wrath of the Jewish community, who set upon the Muslim man en masse, beating him to death. The family of the slain Muslim cried out to the Muslims for assistance against the Jews, prompting the Muslims to respond, which led to a clash between both sides.

Upon hearing of this event, the Messenger of Allah (saw) immediately marched out alongside the Muslims and imposed a stringent siege on Banu Qaynuqa', initially deciding to execute the entire tribe. However, he subsequently commuted the decree to the complete expulsion of the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa' from Medina, driving that accursed tribe northward to the borders of ash-Sham.

Such was the firmness of the Messenger of Allah (saw) in protecting the Awrah of even a single Muslim woman – a testament illustrating the legal obligation of the state to uphold the honor of Muslim women. Ironically, the Muslim rulers of Azerbaijan exhibit the exact opposite posture; through state legislation, they compel their citizens (Muslim women) to remove their headscarves and even penalize those who defy their directives. How wretched are such rulers!

Indeed, the shameless actions of the Azerbaijani regime cannot be separated from the system it upholds – a system they themselves openly acknowledge. They force citizens to remove their headscarves under the pretext of maintaining state secularism. To them, education and Islam are two distinct spheres that must not be intertwined; Islam must not intervene in the state's educational system. Such is the core of their secular creed!

This is the catastrophic impact of the secular system upon the Muslim Ummah – a system designed to sever Islam from daily life. From the doctrine of secularism emerged the democratic system, which was forcibly imposed by the West upon the Muslim lands they colonized. Upon gaining independence, this foreign system of Kufr (disbelief) ought to have been eradicated by Muslim rulers and replaced with the Islamic system. Regrettably, it continues to be perpetuated by Muslim rulers, leaving Islam subjugated to this secular order.

Indeed, affliction will continuously beset this Ummah so long as secular rulers and systems remain in power. It is not merely the headscarf that has been stripped from the Muslim Ummah as a consequence of systemic secularism; the entirety of educational policy has been decoupled from Islam. Furthermore, the complete apparatus of ruling system, economics, social interactions, punishment, foreign policy, so on and so forth, have all been lost to the Ummah due to the implementation of the secular-democratic framework – a system that vests sovereignty in the hands of man rather than the Lord of humankind.

Ultimately, there remains no alternative for the Muslim Ummah to “punish” the existing secular regimes – which have oppressed Islam for so long – except through the re-establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate): an Islamic political institution that will restore the comprehensive systems and laws of Islam, thereby reinstating the honor and dignity of the Muslim woman.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Abdul Hakim Othman

Official Spokesperson of Hizb ut Tahrir in Malaysia