

Canada Escalates its Attack on Religion and Muslim Women

News:

The Québec government recently introduced Bill 9, An Act Respecting the Reinforcement of Laïcité in Québec. Laïcité is the constitutional principle of secularism in France. Article 1 of the French Constitution is commonly interpreted as the separation of civil society and religious society.

It discourages religious involvement in government affairs, particularly in the formulation of state policies and the recognition of a state religion. The bill's stated goal is to strengthen secularism (laïcité) in the province, including by closing the public square to prayer – unless it is pre-authorised by the municipality.

Bill 9 builds on and significantly expands Bill 21, Québec's 2019 state secularism law. Bill 21, now known as the Act respecting the laicity of the State, prohibits certain civil servants (for example, teachers and police officers) from wearing religious symbols in the workplace. Bill 9 pushes the idea of secularism much further and again invokes the notwithstanding clause to protect the law from constitutional challenge.

It is presented as a general solution to religious expression infringing upon secular culture, Muslims, in particular, Muslim women, feel that it has a heavier consequence on them when they wear Hijab or Niqab.

Comment:

As the years pass by with ever-increasing stress and attacks on the Muslims of the world, we can only expect new styles to emerge in 2026. The current laws had already been in the pipeline of public debate.

The Supreme Court will soon be considering the ban on religious symbols for government employees. While many of Quebec's citizens agree with the Legault government on Bill 21 and the use of the notwithstanding clause, the population remains largely divided and far from a consensus.

Premier Legault welcomed the Court of Appeal's decision in his government's favour, raising two points he thought important.

First, he deemed that the judgment "confirmed Quebec's right to make its own decisions" by using the notwithstanding clause; one and second, that there was a consensus since "a majority of Quebecers agree with Bill 21."

Second, given that the CAQ government seems to rely heavily on public opinion to justify its positions, this bulletin provides an overview of public opinion in Quebec, based on large-scale surveys by Confederation of Tomorrow and Vox Pop Labs. Such an exercise is essential to identify whether there is consensus on the issues surrounding Bill 21.

The fact of the matter is, all of these high-level wordings used to ensure that civil rights are upheld in Quebec have one simple task to conceal the real agenda of placing Muslims in the category of pariah people who are marginalised and living in fear.

The youth are the target in the sense that they feel ashamed of being different and have immense pressure to conform at a very sensitive time in their lives.

Their parents will have pressure to keep jobs and steer the youth to uphold their Islamic identity, all with the aim of successive generations abandoning the attachment to Allah (swt).

However, we must never allow these worldly offers of fake approval and validation when they compromise their own "freedom" metrics, and we must surely know that we should be loyal only to Allah (swt) and implement the laws of Quran over any other measure.

﴿وَاَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ﴾

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided." [Aal-i Imran:103].

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Imrana Mohammad

Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir