

mittee of the Parliament before, and if it had been discussed and reviewed by the current Judicial Committee, it would certainly have been opposed by the committee members." The member of the Parliament's Judicial Committee added: "The charges and penalties stipulated in the resolution on chastity and hijab do not match the offense. For example, an initial penalty and a supplementary penalty are set for a single offense, which is not appropriate." Salari emphasized that in the context of the hijab, we should focus on cultural initiatives and address the root of the issue,

stating that "we should create the groundwork for promoting the culture of chastity and hijab through education and cultural initiatives, not by imposing severe penalties to address non-compliance with the hijab." He further noted, "The issue of the hijab is a religious, legal, and ideological matter, and no one opposes it. We all emphasize the importance of maintaining the hijab, but the penalties stipulated in this resolution are very severe and do not match the offense." He added, "In my view, it is necessary for the government to submit a revised bill for the

resolution on chastity and hijab to Parliament, or for the representatives to take up the task of revising this law." Salari pointed out, "As I said, we do not oppose the principle of chastity and hijab and are in favor of the overall bill, but we do not find the charges stipulated in the content of this resolution appropriate." Regarding the approval process of this law, the member of the Parliament's Judicial Committee stated, "This bill was reviewed and approved by the Parliament under Article 85 of the Constitution and, after being reviewed and approved by a special committee,

was sent to the Guardian Council for review without being debated on the floor of Parliament." "A bill of this importance must certainly be debated and reviewed on the floor of Parliament, and all representatives should have a say in it, not be approved by a special committee with the votes of a few representatives and then sent to the Guardian Council as a parliamentary resolution," he added. Salari concluded: "Moreover, the Leader has consistently emphasized the importance of cultural initiatives over the imposition of penalties. Setting such severe penalties in this resolution is

contrary to the directives and emphasis of the Leader."

Gov't should submit revised bill to resolve issues

Alireza Salimi, a member of the Parliament's Presiding Board and a supporter of the law, stated: "If the government has any issues or criticisms regarding the law on Chastity and Hijab, it should submit a revised bill instead of creating a fuss." Referring to the criticisms raised regarding the law on Chastity and Hijab, Salimi stated, "The law on Chastity and Hijab, like any other law, is a human creation

and may contain flaws." He added that the law was initially a bill, and "today the government can still submit a revised bill for its amendment. The comments of the president's legal advisor about the law on Chastity and Hijab suggest that he has not read the law." "It would be better if the president's legal advisor read the text of the law on Chastity and Hijab once and then comment on it. If the government finds issues with the law on Chastity and Hijab, it should submit a revised bill in accordance with legal procedures," the member of the Parliament's Presiding Board stated.

Challenges in enforcing hijab law

Social Desk

The ongoing controversy surrounding the hijab law in Iran has not been limited to its latest draft. The bill on hijab has been criticized and opposed by various political figures, sociologists, and the general public since its early stages of review behind closed doors in the special committee of Parliament up until the present day as it has been transformed into law and moved closer to implementation. These objections have sometimes come from statesmen and law enforcers and at other times from religious leaders, heads of the three branches, and even official and cultural institutions of the country.

What did heads of branches say about hijab law?

After Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf announced the date for implementing the Chastity and Hijab law (Dec. 14), all attention shifted to the other two branches to hear what Iran's President Pezeshkian and Judiciary Chief Mohseni Ejei would say. Notably, the dissolution of the morality police and the enhancement of the hijab situation were key slogans and promises made by the president during the election campaign. First, Pezeshkian, who has repeatedly criticized the arbitrary and self-serving treatment of the public, spoke frankly about the ambiguities of the chastity and hijab law in a live televised conversation with the public broadcast by the state media.

The president said on this matter: "There is considerable debate surrounding this issue. They aimed to implement it early on when we arrived. From an enforcement standpoint, it remains quite ambiguous. We want to do the right thing, but intervention might exacerbate the situation. We plan to engage in dialogue to uphold our principles and values without compromising national unity and cohesion. In my opinion, many aspects of this law are questionable. Those advocating for its implementation must possess the skills and capabilities for enforcement, which I do not observe in the current executive system. We need to engage in dialogue."

Referring to the crimes outlined in the law, the president emphasized, "Suppose I am a taxi driver and a woman without a proper hijab gets into my car. What are we supposed to do? Punish both the driver and the passenger! Or, if I own a restaurant and a woman without a proper hijab enters, should I punish both the restaurant owner and that woman? Is this approach feasible? People who have no connection to them will also be dissatisfied. Our education and upbringing system in this area has problems, which we have not yet addressed. Now, we want to come here and solve the issue this way. Is that possible?" Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei, the head of the Judiciary, while stressing the implementation of the law, also highlighted its flaws and signaled a positive intent to improve it. He said, "If there are shortcomings, they should be corrected. We are not saying that this law is divine revelation, but



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the law must be implemented. The law should be the final word, but it must be precise and enforceable."

Nasser Imani, a conservative political figure, believes that the head of the Judiciary is opposed to the law on hijab and chastity. He said, "If you pay attention to Mohseni Ejei's remarks, it seems that he is also not satisfied with this law or finds its implementation problematic." On the other hand, those close to Qalibaf believe that the parliament speaker is also opposed to the hijab bill, a claim that can be substantiated in his recent statements. Although he stated that he defends the law on Hijab and Chastity on the grounds of respecting the Constitution and the votes of the representatives, he sent positive signals for amending the shortcomings of the law to the government. "This means that if there are indeed issues, the same law that approved this has also provided a pathway for its amendment. But a law is a law; we must be careful about this."

SCCR aligned with gov't

In recent days, the unprecedented statements of Abdolhossein Khosropanah, the secretary of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (SCCR), regarding the hijab law have become noteworthy. Kowsarpanah's explicit opposition sent a positive signal to the government, indicating that it is not alone in criticizing the law. Some have even predicted that even if the law is enacted, the volume of concerns and criticisms may delay its implementation, at

least until some of its provisions are revised.

Kowsarpanah, speaking to a group of journalists, emphasized that the supreme council was not consulted about this law and stated, "If a driver picks up a woman without a proper hijab, he should be warned. If he doesn't warn her, the driver should be penalized. What offense has the driver committed? His livelihood is through driving. I see such issues in the law. These are the valid issues that need to be addressed. Recently, I heard the speaker of Parliament say that they are open to suggestions and amendments and will certainly consider them. Hopefully, they will finalize the law with these amendments, and the government, with its national unity approach, will implement it."

On-time warning to officials

Despite the fact that supporters of the chastity and hijab law, who are mostly from the hardline factions, emphasize the need for its swift implementation, opponents of the law are sounding the alarm about the challenges it could create once enforced. These opponents, who span the political spectrum from conservatives to reformists, highlight the severe financial penalties in the law and stress that many of its definitions, such as improper hijab or immodest clothing, are ambiguous and lack clear definitions. As Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Mohammad Dastghaib, one of Iran's prominent clerics, wrote in opposition to the chastity and hijab

the Qur'an and hadiths?" He added, "The result of such laws is only to increase public dissatisfaction. As you know, if a law that forces people to follow a religious command through violent means leads to a dislike of the religion itself, according to the principle of deterring through respect, such a law is contrary to the sacred Islamic law and has the opposite effect. As some other top Shia authorities also believe, mandatory hijab is not feasible; and with compulsion, the state of hijab in society will not improve." Ali Rabiei, the advisor to the president on social affairs, emphasized on the social media platform X that the implementation of this law is impractical and would lead to "civil disobedience".

Mehرداد Lahouti, a member of the Independent Bloc at Iran's Parliament, stated, "I see many flaws in the chastity and hijab law, and in a way, it pits people against each other. For example, when a person goes to a store, the seller cannot get into an argument with the customer. Since the chastity and hijab law was not the result of a decision by this parliament, I hope this parliament decides to address the flaws in the law." Abbas Abdi, a reformist political activist said, "This law sets people against each other and against the state in the short term, but in the long term, it unites people against the government. It's not a situation where people will always fight each other; each will find their own way and direct their frustration towards a single

point." Mohsen Gharavian, a conservative political activist and professor at the Qom Seminary, also expressed his concerns about the law, "Has the feasibility of implementing this law been assessed and measured? I don't know. It seems that this lack of assessment will also make the implementation of the law problematic. Another point is that some have said that this law will create a crisis, and this is somewhat evident."

Fate of hijab law after enactment

With the growing number of opponents to the implementation of the chastity and hijab law, the question arises: What will be the fate of the law after its enactment by the parliament speaker? As some political and legal figures have said, the government has delayed the law's implementation through consultations with the authorities. The government effectively delegated it to the National Security Council. The council then called on Parliament to stop the process of implementing the hijab law.

Fatemeh Mohajerani, the government spokesperson, also addressed the fate of the law's implementation in her most recent press conference, "The government has concerns and, as the implementing body, is currently in discussions and negotiations to reach a conclusion. This law aims to promote a certain behavioral standard, and we hope to reach a resolution."

