

# IRAN: Appeals court date set for imprisoned evangelical activist

HRANA (15.08.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2OGL7jJ>– Majid Reza Souzanchi, 34, Christian convert detained in Evin Prison, has received a summons order to appear before Branch 54 of the Tehran Appeals court on December 11, 2018.

He was tried on April 25, 2018, along with Fatemeh Mohammadi for “Membership in Evangelical Groups and Evangelical Activities”, presided by Judge Ahmadzadeh. Mr Souzanchi was sentenced to five years in prison and Ms Mohammadi received a six-month prison sentence on charges of “Engaging in Evangelical activities” and “Acting against national security through propaganda against the regime”.

A source close to the defendants told HRANA that Mr Souzanchi suffered from broken ribs as a result of being beaten up twice during his interrogation by Intelligence Ministry agents. Souzanchi is also worried that his home was searched while he was in prison and some of his personal belongings and family photos were confiscated. He has written several letters [to the authorities] on the matter but has not received any response. In June, his prison cell was raided by agents who confiscated his personal belonging including a notebook in which he had written excerpts from the Bible.

Prison officials refer to Mr Souzanchi as “impure” and “Daeshi” (a member or ISIS). Mr Rostami, the Prosecutor’s

representative, had told Mr Souzachi and Ms Mohammadi that “if we were in you Christians’ hands, you would have executed us”. Samad Hadipour, the investigator of Evin court’s Branch 3, referred to the church as a “casino”.

Article 26 of the Iranian constitution guarantees religious minorities’ rights: “...recognized religious minorities’ associations are free [to exist]...and no one can be forced to participate in these associations or prevented from participating in one of them”.

Hassan Rouhani, Iranian President, during last year’s presidential election campaign stressed the importance of civil rights, and published a “Civil Rights Charter”. However, these promises have not been carried out.

Article 99 of the Charter states: “Citizens have the right to access facilities to participate in cultural life [of their choice], including the right to found associations, perform religious, cultural, and ethnic ceremonies as long as they respect the laws”.

.....

**If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!**

**Also:**

**HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>**

**List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20**

countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

---

## **IRAN: 208 years behind bars, 1554 lashes and 10 years of exile for detained Dervishes**

Inside of Iran (01.08.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2vKf4bK>– Sentences for 39 Gonabadi dervishes have been issued by the Revolutionary Court. They have been sentenced to 208 years behind bars, 1554 lashes, 8years deprivation of social activities and 10 years of exile.

The sentences are as below:

Vahid Khamoushi: 12 years behind bars and 2years of exile in Rayen.

Alireza Azadravesh: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes and 2years of exile in Kahnuj.

Ali Karimi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes and 2years of exile in Borazjan.

Ehsan Malek Mohammadi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes and 2years of exile in Zabol.

Ehsan Saffari: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes and 2years of exile in Zabol.

Arman Abolfathi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.

Armin Abolfathi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.

Morteza Sohrabpour: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.

Saeed Khamoushi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Mohammad Asad Samani: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Masoud Ali Madadi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Majid Rashidi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Amir Seyedi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Afshin Salimi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Amir Salimi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Mohammad Reza Abolfathi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Majid Amir Ahmadi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Hamid Reza Amir Ahmadi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Mohammad Reza Zehtab: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Ebrahim Allah Bakhshi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Nemat Kazemi: 7 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Babak Taghiyan: 7 years behind bars.  
Mostafa Arman Doust: 7 years behind bars.  
Mehran Asghar Zadeh: 7 years behind bars.  
Amin Hosseini: 6 years behind bars, 74 lashes.  
Asghar Samadyar: 5 years behind bars.  
Amir Bahador Jafari: 3 years behind bars.  
Meysam Azizan: 3 years behind bars.  
Malek Rezaie: 2 years behind bars.  
Ali Asghar Salari: 2 years behind bars.  
Elyas Mohammadi: 2 years behind bars.  
Mohammad Mir Ahmadi: 2 years behind bars.  
Ali Bolbolie: 2 years behind bars.  
Ashkan Kazemi: 2 years behind bars.  
Mousa Fazli Pour: 2 years behind bars.  
Mehdi Saadat: 1 year behind bars.  
Hashem Avazeh: 1 year behind bars.  
Majid Shaqayegh: 1 year behind bars.  
Ebrahim Rezaie: 1 year behind bars.

.....

**If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!**

*Also:*

HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>

List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

---

## **IRAN: Prison sentence was issued for “Payam Kharaman”, another Christian convert in Bushehr**

Mohabat News (11.08.2018) – <https://bit.ly/20vQ6Uz> – The Christian convert, “Payam Kharaman”, has been sentenced to one year in prison on charge of propaganda activities against the system and in favor of Zionist Christianity through holding house meetings, evangelism, and invitation to Christianity and inclination to the land of Christianity. This Christian convert was among 12 citizens who were arrested in Bushehr (on Tuesday, April 7, 2015).

The cases of these 12 individuals with similar accusations have been under review until late April, 2018 while they were released on bail.

According to the verdict issued by Islamic Revolutionary Court

of Bushehr headed by Judge Abbas Asgari, Payam Khoraman and 11 other individuals including "Shapour Jozi" and his wife, "Parastoo Zariftash" were sentenced to one year in prison, and they would be informed of the verdict on Wednesday, June 20, 2018.

The Christian convert, "Payam Kharaman" says to Mohabat News in detail about the case: on Tuesday, April 7, 2015, at around 8 A.M. – 8:30 A.M., 3 plain-clothed security agents came to the house, entered with a warrant, and rummaged throughout the house for 2 hours, and after inspection, seized computer case, mobile phone, flash memory, CDs, books and pamphlets and even private photo album, and transported me to the intelligence office of Bushehr near Bisim Avenue, and they started interrogating me from the first hours of my arrival in prison and continued until the evening of that day.

One of the special terms cited in the case of these 12 Christian converts is "inclination to the land of Christianity", which is less common. Payam Khoraman says: interrogations were obviously indicating that they were looking for the accused's confession to communication with abroad, especially America, Britain and Israel, and this term has originated from this matter.

He said: "the pressure and harassment of the security forces on me began in early 2012, and I was repeatedly summoned by the Office of Police Monitor Public Place in Bushehr and interrogated about evangelism and communication with abroad, and I always insisted on the belief in Christianity for myself and not for promotion of Christianity. Because I had a boutique shop in Bushehr, a number of officers' family members in the office knew me and informed of heavy sentences against

me, and the case which was under investigation by intelligence office. I thought it was just an empty threat, but unfortunately became a serious issue one or two years later.”

Advocacy director of Article 18, Mansour Borji introduced the charges attributed to these Christian converts and the process of judicial review on their cases “as example of inquisition and the violation of the freedom of religion and belief”, and he added: “Security agencies, following an ineffective policy in recent years, have tried to eliminate Farsi-speaking Christianity through unlawful pressures and false accusations in revolutionary courts and seemingly legal route.”

While corruption, theft and embezzlement of senior government officials and their relatives are the greatest problem in the country, and judicial systems infected with the corruption do not have the ability to fight against these problems, the harassment of religious minorities particularly Christians have been mandated for the Islamic Republic’s security apparatuses. Many Iranian Christians have preferred to abandon their homes in the last two decades and leave Iran to avoid the securities and judges.

.....

**If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!**

**Also:**

**HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>**

**List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20**

countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

---

## **USA-CHINA: Hope for Sister Zou Demei: Lawyer files motion to reopen her case**

Bitter Winter (13.08.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2nBFA2w>– Readers of Bitter Winter may be familiar with the case of Ms. Zou Demei, a Chinese woman detained in Detroit and facing deportation back to China, where she will be arrested and probably executed.

Ms. Zou was until 2016 the regional leader of The Church of Almighty God (CAG), a Christian new religious movement banned in China, in the four provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou, Chongqing, and Sichuan. This made her one of the top leaders of the CAG in China, and one of the most wanted by the authorities, with a substantial bounty placed on her head. As all CAG members, she destroyed all evidence of her true identity and went under the pseudonym of Yao Lu.

In 2016, Ms. Zou was informed that she was wanted not only as a leader of a banned religious movement, which was already bad enough but on trumped up charges of espionage, which might lead to the death penalty. She managed to escape from China with the passport of another person with her picture pasted on it and reach South Korea. Since South Korea, unlike the U.S.



and Canada, has not granted asylum to any CAG refugee and it was unsafe for her to live there with a false passport, she decided to move to the U.S. She landed in Detroit on January 24, 2017, where her passport was detected as false and she was arrested.

Language problems prevented her and a few co-religionists who initially tried to help her to make her case understandable to the American authorities, and her asylum request was denied on December 4, 2017, with an order that she should be deported back to China. Her appeal was rejected on May 22, 2018.

At this stage, the CAG contacted several NGOs and instructed a specialized lawyer, Mr. Russell Abrutyn of Detroit, who took over representation of Ms. Zou and was informed that Homeland Security intended to deport her back to China after August 15, 2018.

Mr. Abrutyn has now filed a motion to reopen with the Board of Immigration Appeals, the highest administrative immigration court in the United States. This motion was based on new evidence that only recently became available thanks to the campaign by the international human rights community, a campaign that has drawn increased attention to Ms. Zou's plight. As a result of this campaign, the people whose lives she touched through her leadership role in China with the CAG recognized her picture (although she had known her under a different name) and came to her defense by corroborating her role within the CAG.

Also, Mr. Abrutyn explained, "the Board of Immigration Appeals

has been provided with official government reports, which should have been but weren't provided before, highlighting the religious persecution in China against the CAG and its adherents."

Bitter Winter, who has led the campaign in favor of Ms. Zou, trust that, with the new documents, deportation to China, which would lead to her arrest and detention and most probably to her execution, may be avoided. However, Ms. Zou needs any help she may receive from institutional and private advocates for religious liberty and human rights.

.....

If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!

*Also:*

HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>

List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

---

**UK: Restrictions lifted on Dartford nurse who gave Bible**

# to patient

*A nurse sacked from a hospital and then placed under restrictions for imposing her religious beliefs on patients has been told she is fully fit to practice.*

BBC (08.08.2018) – <https://bbc.in/2vuEDNU>– Sarah Kuteh was dismissed from Darent Valley Hospital in Kent two years ago after giving her Bible to a patient.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) said it was now in the public interest for her to return to practice.

Ms Kuteh told BBC South East she was absolutely elated at the decision because nursing was her passion.

She said: “I didn’t expect to be sacked so I was shocked. This means so much to me because I can go back to the profession I love.”

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust said it was pleased she could continue her career as a nurse unrestricted.

## ***Patients’ faiths***

It said her case had never been about religion and she was dismissed for gross misconduct after she was made aware of several complaints from patients and asked to refrain from preaching to them.

“We took no satisfaction in having dismissed Sarah but must always act in the best interests of our patients and in accordance with professional codes of conduct,” a statement said.

The mother of three had worked at the hospital in Dartford from 2007 and had 15 years of nursing experience when she was sacked in August 2016.

Her job had involved asking patients about their faith as part of a pre-operative assessment questionnaire.

She said that although she had no intention of imposing her beliefs on others, she would sometimes tell them about how her own faith had helped her overcome adversity.

Ms Kuteh launched legal action in December 2016, supported by the Christian Legal Centre, and in a statement at the time she said: “How could it ever be harmful to tell someone about Jesus?”

Her dismissal was ruled as fair by an employment tribunal in April 2017.

Ms Kuteh subsequently found a new job in a nursing home, but was only allowed to work as a nurse subject to a range of conditions imposed by the NMC.

At a hearing before an NMC panel last month, her supervisor praised her as “a kind, caring, honest, friendly nurse” and “a valuable member of the team”.

Ms Kuteh conceded that giving her personal bible to a patient was “going too far” and “crossing professional boundaries”, and she should have used a bible from the hospital chaplaincy instead.

The NMC unanimously ruled the restrictions should end.

.....

If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!

*Also:*

HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>

List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20

countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

---

## **CHINA: Thousands of Muslims**

# protest against the demolition of the Weizhou Grand Mosque

AsiaNews.it (11.08.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2vCGv7w> – Protests have broken out in the Ningxia Autonomous Region after the authorities decided to tear down the Grand Mosque in Weizhou.

Thousands of ethnic Hui Muslims protested Thursday, when they occupied the square in front of the place of worship. As a result of the rally, the authorities were forced to postpone the demolition.

The head of the county tried to reassure the faithful, telling them that the mosque would not be torn down until a deal is reached to build another one.

The mosque's management committee said that the authorities sent a demolition notice on 3 August with a deadline for this Friday. According to the order, the mosque, which was completed last year, had not been granted the necessary planning and construction permits.

After days of negotiations between the authorities and religious leaders, it was agreed earlier on Thursday that the government would not demolish the mosque but remove eight of its domes.

The new mosque replaced an earlier one that had been built to replace Weizhou's 600-year-old Chinese-style mosque, which was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

One of two red banners strung from the mosque's exterior walls read: "Resolutely support the Chinese Communist Party, defend ethnic unity, safeguard the freedom of faith".

The banner stress subordination to the Party but demand religious freedom as promised by the Chinese constitution.

Tearing down places of worship, including many churches, is part of an ongoing campaign to "sinicise" China's religions, Christianity included. Churches too have been affected.

"Sinicisation" means submission to the Party and the elimination of foreign influences, including in art and architecture.

In the case of Islam, Muslim icons and Arabic signs have been removed from streets in towns and counties across the region.

For decades, China's Hui Muslims have been left in peace by the regional government. However, as the government intensifies its crackdown against Uyghurs in Xinjiang, the Hui are also being targeted.

The government fears a rise in radicalism. For this reason, several mosques in Ningxia have been ordered to cancel public Arabic classes, whilst a number of private Arabic schools have been told to shut down.

Children under 16 are no longer allowed to engage in religious activity or study in Linxia, a deeply Islamic county in Gansu, a province next to Ningxia, in western China. The latter had been a haven of comparative religious tolerance for local ethnic Hui Muslims.

Recently the authorities have instructed mosques to display national flags and stop sounding the call to prayer to reduce "noise pollution".

In view of what is happening, Hui Muslims fear they will be subjected to the kind of surveillance and repression that Uyghurs have to endure in Xinjiang.

In the past year, "The winds have shifted", said a senior local imam who requested anonymity. "Frankly, I'm very afraid they're going to implement the Xinjiang model here."

"They want to secularise Muslims, to cut off Islam at the roots," he added. "These days, children are not allowed to believe in religion: only in communism and the party."

More than a thousand boys used to attend his mid-sized mosque to study Quranic basics during summer and winter school



holidays but now they are banned from even entering the premises.

Parents were told the ban on extracurricular Quranic study was for their children's own good, so they could rest and focus on regular coursework.

There are more than 10 million Hui in China, half of the country's Muslim population, according to 2012 government figures.

In Linxia, □□they are well integrated with the Han ethnic majority and have always had the opportunity to practise their faith freely.

.....  
**If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!**

**Also:**

**HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>**

**List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>**

---

# CHINA: Underground Catholic priests removed

Authorities send two priests packing in Gansu province for holding a summer camp for youngsters.

Tianshui Diocese's open church holds a summer camp for young people in 2017. Two underground priests of Maijiqu Ganquan Catholic Church have been removed after being accused of holding a summer camp. (Photo by Faith Weekly)

UCA News (09.08.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2MiCy00> – Two underground parish priests in China's Gansu province have been removed after being accused of holding a summer camp for a youth group at their church.

Father Wang Yiqin of Hui county and Father Li Shidong of Leling city of Shandong province were serving Maijiqu Ganquan Catholic Church in Tianshui Diocese.

Tianshui Municipal Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee has sent a letter asking the local branch of the state-controlled Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association to send personnel to replace the priests, who were accused of holding a summer camp for Bosco Youth Group at the church and sent back to their hometowns.

On July 21, the committee issued a letter stating that no association personnel were involved with the church, which had become a base for underground clergy.

It asked the association to appoint personnel "to strengthen the management of religious affairs in accordance with the law and according to the regulations on religious affairs."

Father Zhao Jianzhang of Tianshui's open church is deputy director and secretary-general of the Gansu Catholic Patriotic

Association and Catholic Administration Commission.

He told ucanews.com that he had been informed of the incident and the parish office had received a letter but he was out of town and would handle the incident when he returned.

“There are people in the government who want to break the current situation. They do not allow the underground church to exist and must convert it to be open because only Tianshui in northwest China still has an underground community,” a source said.

Maijiqu Ganquan Catholic Church is one of only two underground churches in Tianshui Diocese.

Built in 1921, the church grounds cover 7,000 square meters containing a church, complex buildings and houses. The church has been approved by Yuanbeidao district government.

---

## **CHINA: More destroyed mosques in Xingiang**

*Seven out of eight mosques in one of the areas of Lianmuqin town in Xinjiang have been demolished; the remaining one is strictly supervised.*

Bitter Winter (09.08.2018) –  
<https://bitterwinter.org/more-destroyed-mosques-in-xinjiang/> –  
According to a local source, seven of the eight mosques in the Shanshan county’s 11th Brigade of Lianmuqin town, have already been destroyed. The local Muslims are allowed to attend the remaining mosque, but there are more than twice as many government officers as worshipers inside it during prayers.

The local authorities keep some guards in between the prayers as well. “Every time there are 13 Uyghurs practicing namāz, 37 government personnel are on duty,” a local Uyghur Muslim said. “We need to show our ID or give our fingerprints each time we enter the mosque for the five daily namāz prayers. Every time we kneel down and pray to Allah, the government officials stand beside us and stare directly at us. When they’re looking right at you, it’s impossible to feel calm. I finally stopped going.”

Reported by Li Benbo

---

## **Chinese ministry of state security takes over the campaign against Bitter Winter**

*Since the arrests of reporters did not stop Bitter Winter, China escalates the campaign against our magazine and adopts extraordinary measures to prevent the leaks of secret documents.*

Bitter Winter (03.08.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2MoKieG>– Bitter Winter reported on August 1 that several reporters that have sent information and documents to our magazine were arrested in China. The hunt for our correspondents and the arrests continue, and we are publishing new details on the campaign against Bitter Winter.

The incident that persuaded the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to launch a nationwide crackdown against *Bitter Winter* was an article we published on May 18, 2018, which included the reproduction of the confidential *Plan for the Special Campaign on Legal Investigation and Prosecution of South Korean Christian Infiltrations*, directed at the house churches established by South Korean Christian groups in China. We have now learned that the publication of this top-secret document created problems in the relationships between China and South Korea.

As a result, CCP issued another secret document, which we publish today, whose English translation reads as follows:

“Bitter Winter, an overseas hostile website, published an article named ‘CHINA LAUNCHES A SPECIAL CAMPAIGN TO CRACK DOWN ON SOUTH KOREAN CHRISTIAN GROUPS,’ relating to the sub-projects and attaching images of the special campaign conducted in various provinces, cities, and counties. This article has been reproduced and hyped by some hostile media outlets outside the border. The contents published on the website raise the suspicion that they may also have illegally obtained the document “Plan for the Special Campaign on Legal Investigation and Prosecution of South Korean Christian Infiltrations,” which was jointly produced by the Central United Front Work Department, the Ministry of Public Security, and State Bureau of Religious Affairs. According to the demand of the Ministry of Public Security, the Provincial Department of Public Security has filed a special case to trace the source of the confidentiality leakage, firmly crack down on any illegal perpetration on suspicion of lawlessly obtaining the state confidential information, illegally possessing the

state confidential information, secret documents, material, items, and intendedly leaking the state confidential information. The special case should be reported to the departmental supervisor. A sub-case should be filed in a unified code, and immediate investigations relating to the special campaign against the confidentiality leakage should be conducted.”

The result of this document was a national manhunt, leading to the arrest of dozens of correspondents of *Bitter Winter*. The fact that, meanwhile, we published another top-secret document, the action plan against the movements listed as *xie jiao* (“heterodox teachings”) for 2018-2019, presumably did not endear us to the CCP either.

We are informed that the CCP, following its best traditions, is also preparing a campaign of fake news against *Bitter Winter* and is busy producing false documents “proving” that we are “connected” with several groups included in the list of *xie jiao*.

Our latest information, dated August 2, is that the CCP lost confidence in the ability of the local Public Security Bureaus, and perhaps of Office 610, which specializes in fighting *xie jiao*, to crack down on *Bitter Winter*, and the Chinese Ministry of State Security is now taking over the investigations on the case. This campaign is in turn classified as top-secret, and its details have only been shared with officers ranked at the level above PSB (Public Security Bureaus), including leaders ranked as directors of sections or above in the departments of PSB, Procuratorates, Courts of Law, Justice Bureaus, and so on. Investigations are being conducted on a comprehensive scale.

Due to the leaks to *Bitter Winter*, the CCP is also organizing a new “confidentiality education” programs among the units in the realm of politics and law, asking relevant personnel to take measures to secure confidentiality, and warning that any breach of the security protocol will be severely punished.

.....

If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!

*Also:*

HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>

List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

---

## **Denmark veil ban: First woman charged for wearing niqab**

*A woman has become the first person in Denmark to be charged with wearing a full-face veil in public, after a ban came into effect on Wednesday.*

BBC (04.08.2018) – <https://bbc.in/2na9nPP>– The 28-year-old came to the police’s attention when a scuffle broke out

between her and another woman at the top of an escalator at a shopping centre north of Copenhagen.

She was fined when she refused to remove the veil.

The new law has provoked protests and criticism from human rights groups.

It does not mention burkas and niqabs by name, but says "anyone who wears a garment that hides the face in public will be punished with a fine".

An initial report into the altercation on Friday suggested that one woman was trying to remove the other's veil, but police said this was not clear.

"During the fight her niqab came off, but by the time we arrived she had put it back on again," police spokesperson David Borchersen told the Ritzau news agency.

Police reviewed CCTV footage to determine whether the second woman had intentionally pulled off the veil, and believed it was incidental to the fight.

They said both women were charged with violating the peace and said one had also been charged with violating the full-face veil law.



She was given a 1,000 kroner fine (\$155; £120) after refusing to take it off at their request.

On Wednesday night protesters gathered in the capital to demonstrate against law, with women in traditional burqas and veils standing alongside people with makeshift coverings.

Friday's incident is reported to have taken place at a shopping centre in Horsholm, 25km (15 miles) north of Copenhagen.

Some Muslim women have said they will not adhere to the law – which carries a 10,000 (\$1,500; £1,200) kroner penalty for repeat offenders.

Human Rights Watch has labelled the ban “discriminatory” and said it was the “latest in a harmful trend.”

Last year the European Court of Human Rights upheld a similar Belgian ban, saying that communal harmony trumped an individual's right to religious expression.

Full or partial bans are also in place in France, Austria, Bulgaria and the German state of Bavaria.

**HRWF Comment on the Belgian ban**

In the **Chamber** judgment of 11 July 2017 in the case of **Belcacemi and Oussar v. Belgium** (application no. 37798/13), the European Court of Human Rights held, unanimously, that there had been: **no violation of Articles 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and 9 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion)** of the European Convention on Human Rights, **and no violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination)** taken together with Articles 8 and 9.

The case concerned the ban on the wearing in public of clothing that partly or totally covers the face under the Belgian law of 1 June 2011.

The Court found in particular that the restriction sought to guarantee the conditions of “living together” and the “protection of the rights and freedoms of others” and that it was “necessary in a democratic society”.

.....

If you want to be regularly informed about different violations of human rights in the world, [click here](#) for a free subscription to our newsletters!

*Also:*

HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>

List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>