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## Italian judge expels Moroccan lawyer over hijab



By Mohamed Amine Rhaz

**Morocco World News** (18.01.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2mRG6sA> - **An Italian judge ejected a Moroccan trainee lawyer from the courtroom for wearing a hijab on Wednesday.**

The Moroccan trainee lawyer, Asmae Belfakir, was visiting the regional Administrative Court of Emilia-Romagna (TAR), based in Bologna, to attend a session in the court, reported Italian news outlet, *Italian insider*.

The 25-year-old was asked by the judge either to remove the veil or leave the courtroom. Belfakir, the legal representative of Bologna's Islamic community, chose the latter.

"I am upset... It has never happened to me. I have assisted at tens of hearings, even here at the TAR and nobody has ever asked me to take off the veil," said Belfakir.

The Judge, Giancarlo Mozzarelli, said that he acted "with respect to our culture and our traditions." Belfakir highlighted this point afterwards: "he spoke of culture, not even of the law." She recalled that she had attended a hearing with the same judge on December 5, 2017 "and he didn't say anything to me."

The Organization of Young Italian Lawyers opposed the judge's action, saying that it is against constitutional principles and expressed solidarity with Belfkir.

Yassine Lafram, the Muslim community coordinator of Bologna, noted that there are no laws prohibiting the headscarf in courtrooms, adding that the judge adopted an "arbitrary position."

The judge in the case declined to comment. Belkafir, the trainee who was ejected, has a degree in law from the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, with a thesis on women's bodies and Islamic law. She was chosen as a trainee by the legal office of the Emilian University.

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