

## Table of Contents

- [Three-quarters of Swiss back a burka ban](#)

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## Three-quarters of Swiss back a burka ban

Swissinfo (08.01.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2Fyf7uz> - A nationwide ban on face-coverings - a de facto burka ban - would currently get the thumbs-up from 76% of Swiss voters, according to a poll in the SonntagsZeitung and Le Matin Dimanche. Around half also support the idea of Islam becoming an official Swiss religion.

Six out of ten respondents said they would definitely back the ban on face-coverings, put forward by the rightwing Swiss People's Party. Some 16.5% said they were leaning towards a ban, 7% were leaning against it, 13% were definitely against it and 3% said they had yet to decide.

Almost 70% of respondents also wanted to see headscarves banned from schools.

But while the Swiss appear to be against burkas and niqabs, that is not the case for Islam as a religion: 48% backed official recognition of Islam as a state religion, like Christianity. This idea has been proposed by the leftwing Social Democratic Party, on condition that the Islamic communities adhere to a moderate form of Islam and organise themselves transparently.

The online surveyexternal link by market researchers Marketagent asked 1,264 Swiss aged 18-75 in German- and French-speaking Switzerland between December 7-18.

Ticino is the only canton so far to introduce a total face-covering ban in public places. St Gallen has a less restrictive form of ban, but voters have rejected the idea in Zurich, Solothurn, Schwyz, Basel City and Glarus. Valais lawmakers recently outlawed a cantonal vote on the wearing of headgear on the grounds that it would violate the constitution.



**BURKA**

The **burka** is the strictest interpretation of this religious dress prescription. It covers the entire body from the top of the head to the feet and is worn in Afghanistan. There is a grille or mesh window of cloth or horsehair over the eyes for women to see out of.



**NIQAB**

The **niqab** is a face veil covering the hair, neck, and face, but not the eyes. The niqab is worn mainly by women from the Gulf states, but also in other countries.



**HIJAB**

The **hijab** is a scarf covering the hair and neck but not the face. In some regions it is worn in combination with a niqab.

