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Tunisia bans niqab in government offices

Tunisia's prime minister has banned the full-face veil in all government buildings due to security concerns. It comes after a deadly double suicide bombing in Tunis in late June.

Deutsche Welle (05.07.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2JpaqqV> - Prime Minister Youssef Chahed has barred women from wearing the full-face veil — or niqab — after the latest suicide attack in the capital, Tunis, at the end of June left two dead and seven wounded.

Chahed signed a government circular "banning access to public administrations and institutions to anyone with their face covered," his office said. The decision was made for "security reasons."

On Tuesday, the mastermind of those bombings blew himself up in a Tunis suburb to evade capture, the Interior Ministry said. But it denies that he was wearing a niqab to disguise himself, which witnesses had claimed.

Police instructed to be vigilant

As far back as February 2014, police had been instructed to step up supervision of the wearing of the niqab — which covers the whole head apart from the eyes — as part of anti-terrorism measures, to prevent its use as a disguise or to escape justice.

Niqabs and other forms of Islamic dress had been banned in Tunisia under secular presidents Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Habib Bourguiba until a 2011 coup overthrew Ben Ali.
