

FRANCE: SCHOOL INCIDENTS LINKED TO ISLAMIC GARB HAVE RISEN SHARPLY

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Islamic veil or other traditional forms of Islamic clothing in middle schools and high schools across France rose sharply in the first half of the school year.

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The number of incidents related to the wearing of the Islamic veil or other traditional forms of Islamic clothing in middle schools and high schools across France rose sharply in the first half of the school year.

Figures from the Central Territorial Intelligence Service (SCRT), a police division tasked with monitoring communitarianism and sectarianism across France, have revealed that 144 violations of the secularism law were recorded in the second quarter of this year in French schools, up from 97 breaches in the first quarter, with the overwhelming majority of incidents concerning Islamic garb, *RTL* [reports](#).

In a confidential document published earlier this month which *RTL* managed to obtain, the SCRT stated that the school year of 2022 has witnessed a clear and considerable uptick in violations of the 2004 secularism law in French schools, noting that a surge of incidents where students refuse to remove their Islamic veil or who insist upon wearing traditional Islamic outfits.

According to the SCRT document, students in violation of the secularism law often claim that their wearing of traditional Islamic clothing is cultural rather than religious, with many taking aim at French teachers, calling them “destitute.” Teachers attempting to enforce the law have often been targeted personally by students or their parents via unpleasant and aggressive social media campaigns.

The social media campaigns seek to, among other things, encourage those who've been disciplined for violating the law to report their cases to Muslim advocacy groups and others who claim to combat 'Islamophobia.'

The use of the term Islamophobia remains highly contentious across France, with Macron's government previously criticizing the use of the word, insisting that it's all too often employed as a weapon to shut down legitimate debate and silence justifiable criticism of radical Islam.

In the spring of 2021, the General Secretariat of the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Delinquency and Radicalization distanced itself from the controversial term, saying: To speak of hatred against Muslims, the term 'Islamophobia' is inappropriate since it confuses the stigmatization of believers with criticism of Islam."