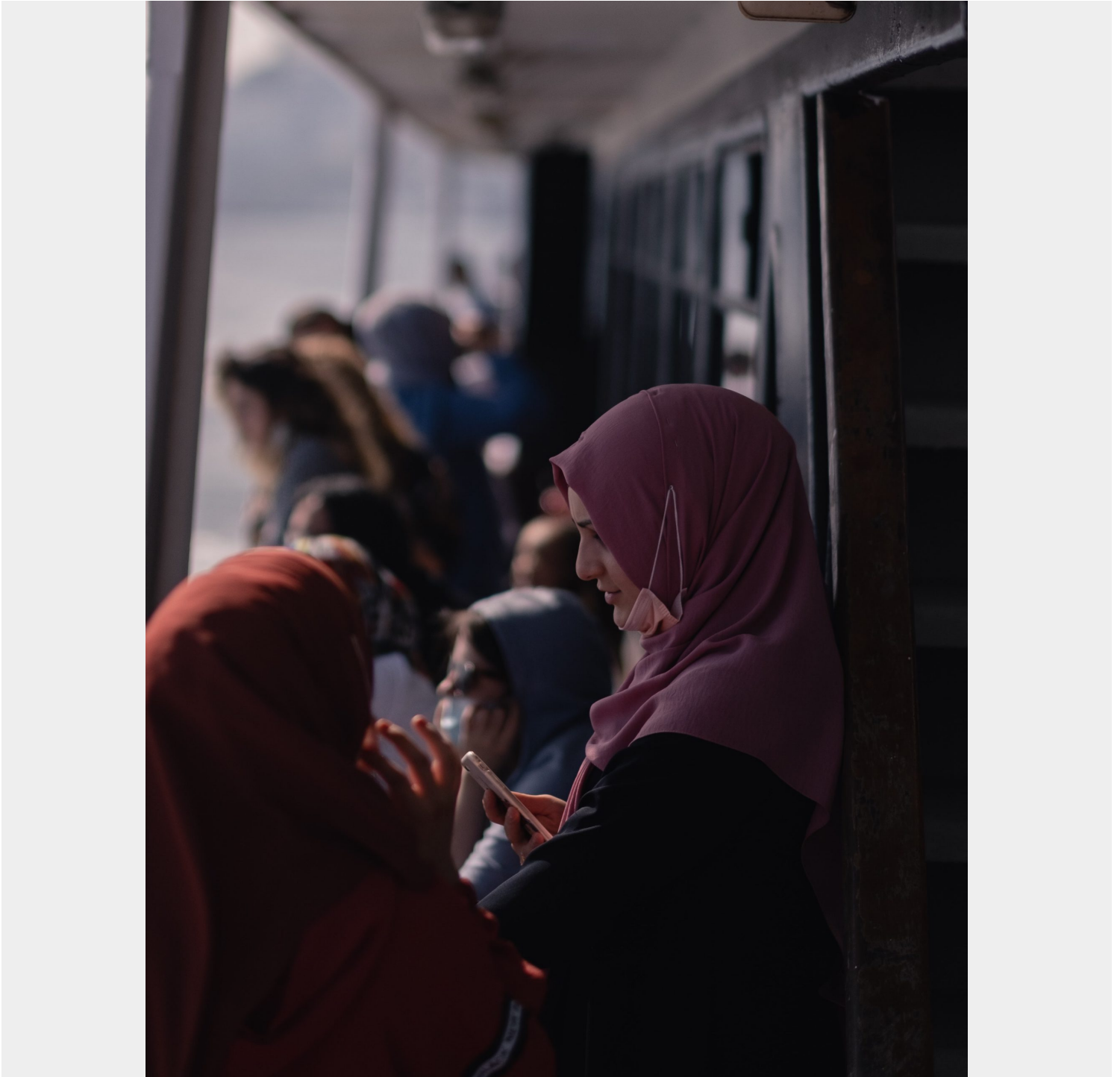


KOSOVO FIGHTS OVER HEADSCARF BAN

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A battle is unfolding in Kosovo over religiously charged headscarves in schools. From [BalkanInsight](#):

An online petition against the wearing of headscarves by Muslim girls in schools has been initiated in Kosovo, following an earlier petition calling for girls who wear a headscarf to be allowed to attend public school was closed by organisers on Saturday over claims that their campaign had caught the attention of decision-makers.

The two campaigns, for and against the wearing of headscarves, have attracted the attention of Prime Minister Albin Kurti. According to [BalkanInsight](#), the prime minister promised on Friday August 12th that his government would produce a "draft law on religious communities." As a heads-up on his own view, Prime Minister Kurti explained that "there should not be a difference between the headscarf and other religious elements" in public life.

According to a report on August 14th by [txtreport.com](#), which translates news articles from non-English language sources, Prime Minister Kurti "sees the age of 16 as the threshold for wearing the headscarf."

August 10th, [EuroNews reported](#) that the headscarf ban "in schools has provoked strong

reactions in Kosovo" ever since it was introduced. In 2010, [the BBC reported](#):

The government decided to forbid the wearing of headscarves in public schools late last year [in 2009], in accordance with the constitution that declares Kosovo—which unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in 2008—a secular country.

The controversy over Islamic headscarves suggests a different balance between religious affiliations among the Kosovar population, than what is reflected in official estimates. The [CIA World Factbook](#) reports that Muslims account for more than 95% of the population. However, that number is based on the 2011 Kosovar census, which was [subject to a boycott](#) among the Serb population.