

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

22 June 2022 Index: EUR 21/5778/2022

FRANCE: COURT ENDORSES DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIM WOMEN IN GRENOBLE

France's highest administrative court yesterday decided to uphold a lower court ruling which banned the use of full-body "burkinis" in Grenoble's public pools after the city had proposed to allow women to wear what they want when swimming in its public pools, Amnesty International's Regional Director for Europe, Nils Muižnieks said:

"Prohibiting certain women from swimming in public pools purely on the basis of their choice of swimwear is punitive, discriminatory and a violation of their human rights. This decision is a missed opportunity to draw a line under meritless and stigmatizing deliberation over women's attire in France.

"Bans restricting what women can wear are punitive, foster stereotypes and entrench intersectional racist and sexist discrimination against Muslim women. The court's conclusion that Grenoble's authorization of use of the "burkini" would "undermine equal treatment" for other users of public services, is absurd and harmful."

Women should be able to wear whatever they want. Yet in France women, and particularly Muslim women, are being repeatedly and maliciously targeted by successive laws, policies and decrees policing their dress. France is legally bound to remove, not create, obstacles to women accessing public life and services."

Amnesty International had [previously](#) expressed concern that the vague, subjective and overly-broad concepts in the 2021 "separatism" law – upon which yesterday's decision was based - would lead to violations of people's human rights and have a particularly negative and discriminatory impact on Muslim individuals and associations.