

## Egypt Khattab: Niqab a national security issue

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Mushira Khattab

Egypt's Family and Population Minister

Egyptian Family and Population Minister Mushira Khattab reported at a press conference yesterday that the issue of niqab, a full face veil for Muslim women, is a "national security issue."

The niqab has become contentious recently after Sheikh Mohamed Tantawi, the head of Al Azhar University, issued a ban on the face covering at the university in a move that angered many. Khattab defended Tantawi's decision as "fatherly."

"The issue of niqab can only be resolved through dialogue and women getting fully convinced it is not in their interest," Khattab said in the press conference. "It cannot be resolved through administrative laws, because if the government tried to interfere with this matter, it would face hardships and obstinacy from girls."

When asked about the possibility of complaints to the ministry from niqab-wearers, Khattab said, "If these women wearing niqab submitted a report to the ministry that they face troubles in entering some places, I would respond by telling them to follow the regulations and rules of the place."

Khattab said that this was especially important after Minister of Higher Education Hani Helal revealed there had been 15 cases of men wearing niqab as a disguise.

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