



Genocide Watch  
The Alliance Against Genocide

## France Country Report August 2022

For decades, France has hosted the [largest](#) Muslim populations in Europe, due to immigration from North and West African and Middle Eastern countries. However, Islamophobia remains pervasive in France, both in legal rulings and socio-cultural discrimination. French Muslims face difficulties [integrating](#) into French society due to perceived cultural differences and anti-Muslim prejudices.

For centuries, France has embraced the ideal of 'laïcité,' which calls for the [separation](#) of religion from socio-economic life. This secularist policy has fostered '[neo-laïcité](#),' which discriminates against religious minorities. 74% of French Muslims say they experience [conflict](#) between religious devotion and active participation in their Western, secular society. Studies show French Muslims are four times more likely to face [discrimination](#) than other religious people.

The government has passed Islamophobic legislation in recent years. President Emmanuel Macron outlined a new law against religious radicalism in February 2021. This [law](#) would 'free Islam in France from foreign influences' by monitoring online hate speech and promoting secularism in public life. However, critics say it [stigmatizes](#) the French Muslim community. In April 2021, the French senate approved an amendment that would [effectively ban](#) Muslim women under the age of 18 from wearing a hijab in public. The senate also voted in January 2022 to ban wearing hijabs and other religious symbols [during sports events](#). This law has had a devastating impact on French Muslim female athletes.

Anti-Roma attitudes in France have also increased in recent years. Over [two-thirds](#) of French people hold unfavorable views of the country's Romani population, with 54% of the ideological left and 76% of the ideological right holding anti-Roma sentiments. Thousands of French Roma have been [forcibly evicted](#) from their communities as part of a crackdown on illegal camps by the French police. These expulsions have affected [over 60%](#) of Roma families and left tens of thousands of French Romani [homeless](#). Anti-Roma propaganda has incited [violence](#) against Romani populations.

Due to the legal and social targeting of the Muslim and Roma communities, Genocide Watch considers France to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination** and **Stage 6: Polarization**.

### Genocide Watch recommends the following:

- French citizens of all religions should peacefully protest against Islamophobic laws.
- The French government should provide financial and housing assistance to homeless Romani.
- The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should investigate the forced displacement of Romanis and Islamophobic laws in France.