



Collective against islamophobia in France

Press release

26th of June 2012

Scandal in French airports

Women are forced to take off their veil for fear of missing their flight

For a dozen of days, in the Nantes-Atlantique airport, **the company in charge of the airport safety SGA imposed to veiled women to take off their veil.** As these passengers were about to board, going through security, the SGA employees even asked for the support of the police whenever a woman manifests her surprise about this order.

If the European procedures include the possibility to check the hair when the security staff considers it necessary, **this verification is not mandatory if the person goes through the metal detector.**

To ensure the safety to all is of course the first purpose of the boarding controls. However, **it is always possible to find a reasonable solution that preserves the dignity of all.** But at Nantes-Atlantic airport, even when the veiled women proposed a hair checking or an inspection in a separate room, it was systematically refused, the staff arguing about a possible security threat.

The humiliation goes even further. After such order, a passenger that just underwent a chemotherapy, **had to show her bald head in front of all other travellers.** Another woman who was flying in order to bury her two-years-old son, got then an additional shock at a time when she would have rather needed comfort.

These employees could have had a better behaviour instead of applying literally such optional, brutal and destabilizing measures.

Thanks to the quick mobilisation of a group of Muslim associations of Nantes and the Pays de la Loire region, this practice, seen by most of Muslim women as an insult, seems to be over now. **But the mobilization should not decrease.** The CCIF, along with Muslim associations of Nantes and the Pays de la Loire region are expecting the Prefet to stand on this issue in order to clarify the situation and make sure the instructions mentioned are respected.

Unfortunately, the case of the Nantes-Atlantique airport is not isolated. The CCIF was also informed of other requests of unveiling during controls at Bordeaux-Merignac airport. The CCIF is asking the associations leaders to bring the issue to the attention of their representatives and to their Prefet in order to apply European safety procedures of airports while respecting the dignity of the veiled travellers, mainly by preferring the hair checking to the unveiling or in case it is needed to take off the veil in a separate room, far from other travellers' gaze. **The CCIF also ask those leaders to inform the travellers from this airport about the situation.** This is meant to inform them about their rights and to prevent any abuse when facing such situation. The CCIF also asks the consulates to contact the prefectures in order to intercede on behalf of their nationals.

The CCIF asks for a collective, quick and massive mobilization, in order to avoid the generalization of such a shameful practice.

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