

Australia senator condemned for burka stunt in parliament

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Ruth Comerford



An Australian senator has provoked anger for wearing a burka in parliament, after pushing for a ban on the Muslim garment.

Pauline Hanson was condemned by fellow senators, with one accusing her of "blatant racism". Proceedings in the senate were halted as she refused to remove the item.

The Queensland senator, of the anti-immigration One Nation party, was seeking to introduce a bill that would ban full face coverings in public – a policy she has long campaigned for.

It is the second time she has worn the garment – which covers the face and body – in parliament, and said her actions were in protest at the senate rejecting her bill. Shortly after other lawmakers blocked her from introducing the bill on Monday, she returned wearing a black burka.

"This is a racist senator, displaying blatant racism," said Mehreen Faruqi, a Muslim Greens senator from New South Wales.

Fatima Payman, an independent senator from the state of Western Australia, called the stunt "disgraceful".

Foreign Minister Penny Wong, who serves as leader of the government in the senate, condemned it as "disrespectful".

"We represent in our states, people of every faith, of every faith of all backgrounds. And we should do so decently," she said.

She added Hanson was "not worthy of a member of the Australian Senate" and moved a motion to suspend Hanson for failing to remove the garment.

In a post on Facebook, Hanson wrote "If they don't want me wearing it - ban the burka."

She previously wore a burka to parliament in 2017, also calling for a national ban at the time.

In 2016, Hanson **was criticised for her maiden speech to the Australian senate**, in which she said the country was in danger of being "swamped by Muslims".

It echoed her controversial 1996 speech in which she warned that the country was in danger of being "swamped by Asians".

Pauline Hanson wears burka in parliament

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