

Winter Semester 2022/2023

# SDAC Guest Lecture Series

## Compulsory Hijab as Gendered State Violence in Iran: Why the Muted Global Feminist Response?

Alicia Izharuddin  
Monash University, Malaysia

Monday  
19.12.22  
18-20:00 c.t.  
Online

\*The lecture will be held via Zoom



Dr. Alicia Izharuddin is a Lecturer in Gender Studies at Monash University, Malaysia and incoming Senior Visiting Fellow in Gender and Sexuality at the National University of Singapore. Her work covers the areas of gender, print culture, and filmmaking practices in Malaysia and Indonesia.

In Iran, chants “Death to the headscarf!” were heard in deadly nation-wide protests that have shaken Iran since September 2022. Women were seen burning their hijabs in the protests up and down the country, including the religiously conservative cities of Qum and Mashhad. Just a week prior to the eruption of the continuous protests, 22-year-old Mahsa Amini died after being beaten by Iran’s ‘morality police,’ who found fault with the way she wore her hijab. Her death, linked directly to the tightening stranglehold over women’s bodies under the leadership of ultra-conservative Ebrahim Raisi, has become an unprecedented rallying point for liberals, moderates, and conservatives alike. Feminist voices on anti-hijab protests are often mute. When Masih Alinejad started her campaign on social media in 2014, calling on women in Iran to post photos of themselves without the hijab, it was the makings of a subversive movement. And yet, the images came and went. Perhaps, valid feminist movements rest on collection action. The anti-veiling protests that began in September 2022 were the most significant since 1979, the year of ‘Islamic revolution’ in Iran. Then, women took to the streets to reject the imposition of the veil. Why is the recent feminist protest more consequential than the ones prior, and what has been the global Muslim feminist response? This lecture engages with the transnational feminist politics of the headscarf and unveiling. Dr. Alicia Izharuddin argues that there are key decisions within and opportunities for Muslim feminist solidarity against gendered state violence that are re-routed away from global military and neoliberal imperialism.

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