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Lawmakers approve one woman cabinet minister Women governors will anger God: Iran cleric



Grand Ayatollah Lotfollah Safi Golpayghani (File)

TEHRAN (AFP)

A top hardline Iranian cleric said on Thursday that "God's fury" would be unleashed if Iran appoints women as governors of some provinces, as was raised as a possibility by a minister last week.

"If some people want to change the principles and values of the revolution without considering the views of clerics, they will face the fury of God and of the people," Grand Ayatollah Lotfollah Safi Golpayghani said on his website.

Golpayghani was reacting to remarks by interior minister Mostafa Mohammad Najjar in the holy city of Qom last week, who when asked whether Iran would appoint women as governors of provinces, replied: "Yes. It is possible."

Golpayghani said the appointment of women in such top jobs was against sharia (Islamic) law.

"They come to Qom, the centre of Shiite Islam, and announce that they will appoint women as governors of some provinces. Do you want to fight with the Quran and the Prophet with such talks that go against sharia?" he asked.

"Who are you against? God's rule or the definite rules of religion?"

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has also faced stiff resistance from hardline clerics, including Golpayghani, in appointing women as cabinet ministers.

Lawmakers, however, did approve one woman cabinet minister - the first female minister of the Islamic republic -- during a vote of confidence in September.

In recent years Iranian women have outnumbered men in universities but they still account for only around 15 percent of the official work force.

Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, women have been banned from becoming judges and suffer from legal inequalities with men in marriage, divorce and inheritance.