

Botswana's dress rules 'sexist'

A ban on civil servants in Botswana wearing tight or revealing clothes to work is "sexist", a women's group says.

The new directive said they could be disciplined for turning up in tight skirts or trousers, sleeveless tops, or clothes that showed cleavages or backs.

The BBC's Letlhogile Lucas says women are particularly angered by a ban on headscarves and elaborate hairstyles.

But the government says workers should dress in a manner appropriate for public office.

Bonolo Khumotaka, publicity secretary for the women's group Emang Basadi, told the BBC the ruling was sexist as the directive did not mention "anything about tight trousers for men".

Botswana's government spokesman Jeff Ramsay told the BBC the dress code applied to both men and women.

Our correspondent in the capital, Gaborone, says headscarves are a traditional part of women's outfits in Botswana.

He says the ruling may force quite a number of government employees - especially the younger ones - to overhaul their wardrobes.

The directive reflects President Ian Khama's tough line on tackling social ills, our reporter says.

Since taking office last year, he has not shied away from controversial decisions.

His government has increased tax on beer by 70% and reduced drinking hours at bars to stem alcohol abuse.

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