

WEEKLY ANALYSIS

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BURNING OF THE HOLLY QURAN IN SWEDEN: CAUSES AND RESPONSES



Weekly Analysis is one of the CSRS publications analyzing significant weekly political, social, economic, and security events in Afghanistan and the region. The prime motive behind this is to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision-making institutions and individuals in order to help them design better policies. Weekly Analysis is published in Pashto, Dari, English and Arabic languages.



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Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS)



BURNING OF THE HOLLY QURAN IN SWEDEN: CAUSES AND RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

Every individual and nation has a spiritual, moral, ideological and cultural existence in addition to bodily and physical existence. Just as every law in the world prohibits the attack on a person's body and has prescribed punishments for it, in the same way, attack on the spiritual and ideological existence of a person is also a crime. For peace and peaceful life among nations in the world, it is necessary not to attack religious and spiritual ideas, and insulting religious rituals is born of emotions, and it is natural that emotions turn into violence and threaten the peace and security of the world, so all Nations should have respect for religious rituals. This is not the first time that the holy religion of Islam is being insulted in the world and especially in the West, before this, the Charlie Hebdo magazine published the caricature of the Prophet (May God bless him and grant him peace) several times in France. In 2012, with the joint efforts of the United States of America and Israel, a film was made by Sam Bassel, an American of Israeli origin, in which Prophet Muhammad, (may God bless him and grant him peace), was insulted. In 2003, Taslima Nasreen wrote a novel in which Islam was insulted. The release of the book called Satanic Verses in England, the release of the film called Fitna in the Netherlands, A reputable American newspaper (LOSANGELES TIME) published a detailed report on the desecration of the Quran by the Americans on May 22, 2005. In this report, the American soldiers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Guantanamo Many incidents of insulting and desecrating the Holy Quran have been reported. Last year, in front of the Turkish embassy in Sweden, a politician named Paloden burned the Quran and this was on the auspicious days of the Great Eid, on Wednesday, June 28th, 37-year-old Iraqi-Swedish Salwan Momika tear and burned the Qur'an in front of the mosque in Stockholm, Sweden, under the permission of the court in a safed and secured area under the protection of the police.. The court has allowed him on the grounds of freedom of speech and expression. After the incident, Momika told a Swedish newspaper that in the next ten days, he will set fire to the Iraqi flag and another copy of the Holy Quran in front of the Iraqi embassy.

REASONS

The reasons behind the burning of the Quran in Sweden can be divided into two main areas:

1- Political reason: Most of the time, politicians insult the holy religion of Islam in order to gain votes and popularity in their countries, so as to get people's votes and get themselves in office. For example: In April 2022, Paludan, who burned the Quran, was a politician and wanted to gain votes through this action. He created a YouTube channel in 2017 and preached against Muslims and Islam through it. And then he ran for election in 2019 and lost the election. ⁱ In 2022, he again burned the Quran to help him in the 2023 elections, so one of the political reasons for these actions is to gain votes and popularity. .

Also, some incidents have specific political reasons. For example, when France supported the State of Palestine in the Security Council, Charlie Hepdo magazine in France immediately



published the caricature of the Prophet (May God bless him and grant him peace). And then a few days later, the magazine was attacked by the plan of the Israeli and American intelligence to incite the French people against the Muslims and force their government to stop supporting Palestine because they are Muslims and Muslims are terrorists.

2- Religious reason: On the one hand, the Quran burners express their hatred towards Islam and cool down their anger in this way, and on the other hand, they think that they will stop the rapid development of Islam in the West. According to the Gates tone Institute's research, in the last few years, 100,000 in England, 70,000 in France, 5,000 in Sweden, 20,000 in Germany, 50,000 in Spain and Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, Finland, Thousands of people in Ireland, Norway and Portugal converted to the blessed religion of Islam. According to a survey by the Faith Matters group, 75 percent of converts to Islam are women and 70 percent are white, and their average age is 27 years.ⁱⁱ Also, according to the New York Times report, 200,000 people convert to Islam every year in the United States, so such a rapid development of the holy religion of Islam in the West is unacceptable to governments on the one hand And on the other hand, this development is not acceptable to the common disbelievers, and this is the reason why they cool down their anger and hatred towards the blessed religion of Islam by insulting this religion, and they think that by doing this, they will prevent the spread of the blessed religion Islam.

THE REACTIONS OF THE ISLAMIC STATES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON SWEDEN'S RELATIONS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan condemned this incident in a statement and called on the government of Sweden to punish the person who committed the act and not to allow such persons to attack the holy religion of Islam and Muslims and to carry out such brutal and provocative actions.

After the insulting of the only rescuer book of mankind the holly Quran in Sweden and providing the safe and secured environment for the doer of such shameful action and allowing the wounding of Muslims' faith, all the Sweden related activities will be stopped by the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan until they ask forgiveness and apologize for this brutal act from all the Muslims

It should not be a secret that Sweden is working in Afghanistan through the Swedish Committee in various fields, especially in the educational sector, and its activities have stopped for now.

Iran has summoned the Swedish political agent and has expressed its regrets about the incident. The statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs states: Burning the Quran is clearly an attack on Islamic sanctities and wrong use of democracy and freedom of expression leads to terrorism and extremism.

The Hezbollah group in Lebanon has called on the Islamic states to make such a decision for the future so that other countries are also afraid of doing such acts and do not allow their citizens to repeat such action again.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation also condemned the said incident on Sunday and requested to take some measures to prevent the repetition of incidents of insulting the Holy



Qur'an in the future. The report states that these measures should be carried out in coordination with Saudi Arabia.^{iv}

Egypt also condemned this incident and considered it as playing with the feelings of Muslims. Protesters gathered in front of the Swedish embassy in Iraq and asked the government to cut off diplomatic relations with Sweden. Protesters also tried to attack the embassy, but they were stopped.

The foreign ministries of Syria and the United Arab Emirates also summoned the Swedish ambassador, shared their concerns and sorrows with him, and considered this action as an act of hatred and hatred.

Morocco summoned the Swedish Chargé d'affaires in this country and called this action of Sweden unacceptable and told him that such incidents have a negative impact on the relations between the two countries.

Turkish President Rajab Tayyip Erdogan condemned this incident in a video message and blamed the Swedish government for allowing such an incident. He added that the perpetrators of this act under the name of expression and freedom will never achieve their goals.

Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and some other Islamic countries have also condemned this incident. After the strong reactions of the Islamic world, Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said: This was legal, but it was not appropriate.

However, in the relations between the states today, national interests are taken into consideration and most of the religious issues are not bearing in mind. But the national interests of Islamic states must include religion and for some states this is also a national interest. On this basis, this event in Sweden will damage Sweden's relations with the Islamic world and will have a negative impact on Sweden's relations with Islamic countries. A practical example of these effects is the relationship between Turkey and Sweden. Last year, a politician named Paloden burned a Quran in front of the Turkish embassy in Sweden, which caused Turkey to react violently and even opposed Sweden's membership in NATO.^v Even after this incident, the President of Turkey said during a telephone conversation with his German counterpart that Sweden will never receive the green light from Turkey for NATO membership due to such evil actions. Sweden has submitted an application for membership in NATO last year, which was opposed by Turkey. After that, negotiations were held between Sweden and Turkey, and it seemed that Turkey was satisfied. However, after the incident of burning the holly Quran, Erdogan has once again shown an opposing position on the issue of Sweden's membership in NATO, but last week, Turkey was convinced through negotiations and accepted Sweden's membership in NATO. He asked Sweden to prevent such incidents in the future.

Along with Islamic states, some non-Muslim states have also condemned this incident. The United States of America has also condemned the burning of the Quran outside a mosque in Sweden. Matthew Miller, the spokesperson of the United States of America's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said in a press conference in response to a journalist's question: We condemn the burning of the Quran and are deeply concerned about it.

Russian President Vladimir Putin also condemned this incident, and during a visit to a historic mosque in Dagestan, while holding the Holy Quran to his chest, he said: In some countries



insulting the Holy Quran is not considered a crime, but it is the holy book of Muslims and Russia considers it a crime of blasphemy and wants the rest of the world to respect this book.

At the same time, on July 12th, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) held a meeting and prepared a resolution regarding the burning of the Quran in Sweden. In this resolution, the incident was condemned and the countries were asked to reform their laws and consider insulting religions as a crime. Representatives of 40 countries voted for this resolution, 28 countries approved it and 12 countries opposed it.

Also, such incidents lead to conflicts and insults of religions, maybe the next day the people of another religion will stand up and insult other religions. And such actions of insulting religions have dangerous consequences, and in fact, one week after the incident of burning the Quran in Sweden, on July 15th, a Muslim in Sweden, named Ahmed Alwish, obtained permission from the court to visit this country. Burn the Torah and the Bible in front of the Israeli embassy. But then he refused to burn it and gave a message to the people to stop insulting religions.

CONCLUSION

This is not the first incident of insulting the holy religion of Islam in the West, but there have been dozens of such incidents before. In addition to political reasons, such incidents have a religious reason and this reason is fundamental because the blessed religion of Islam is progressing day by day in the western world and it is not acceptable to the westerners. Although such incidents are insulting, they still provide some opportunities for the Islamic world and Muslims, because the strong reactions of the Islamic states and the rising of the Muslims with one voice are good news to themselves and for the unity of the Muslims. This kind of united response shows the Islamic movements and all Muslims in general that there is still another source of faith in this Ummah, but it is only necessary to make good use of it, and for this purpose, such a leadership should be created. There is a need to lead the sacred sentiments of the Ummah towards good.

SUGGESTIONS

- 1- The conference of Islamic countries and Islamic states should work together on such a policy in order to prevent such incidents in the future. This policy may also include severing ties with the country that allows such activities to take place.
- 2- Also, by burning the Holy Quran, the Westerners once again showed their enmity with Islam. So, the Islamic countries that are trapped in the Western snare and the West tells them that we will bring you democracy and freedom, this is all their trickery deception. Basically, they want the destruction of the Islamic countries, so the Islamic countries should protect their friends and know the enemy and come out from the west.
- 3- All Islamic states, including Afghanistan, should recognize religion as the most important element of national interest in international relations and implement it through foreign policy.

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Contact Us:

Email: info@csrskabul.com - csrskabul@gmail.com

Website: www.csrskabul.com - www.csrskabul.net



Phone & WhatsApp: +93780618000



www.csrskabul.com



info@csrskabul.com