

Manchester Police name Quran-burning suspect despite threat to life

From the [*Free Speech Society*](#)

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have publicly named a man and disclosed his street address and local area after he was charged with allegedly burning pages of the Quran, despite the clear and immediate risks posed to those accused of 'blasphemy' by radical Islamists.

The 47-year-old man has now [pleaded guilty](#) to causing racially and religiously aggravated intentional harassment, alarm, and distress after setting fire to the Islamic holy book in Manchester city centre, during a livestream on social media.

At Manchester Magistrates' Court, the prosecution said the act had caused distress to a bystander, Fahad Iqbal, who attempted to intervene. In a victim impact statement, Iqbal told the court: "I was quite shocked, disgusted, and offended. I'm a Muslim. I still can't believe someone would do this. When he began to burn the Quran, my heart was about to break out. This is the most emotion I have ever felt."

Despite his guilty plea, GMP's decision to disclose his personal details has provoked serious concerns, given the well-documented dangers faced by those accused of blasphemy. The Free Speech Union (FSU) believes GMP should have liaised with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) before making these details public. The failure to do so will almost certainly result in a direct threat to his life.

Following the arrest, Assistant Chief Constable Stephanie Parker said: "We understand the deep concern this will cause within some of our diverse communities and are aware of a live

video circulating. . . ”

During the hearing, the defendant – who was visibly distressed and in tears – was defended by duty solicitor Zoe Earle. Judge Margaret McCormack, while acknowledging the recent loss of the defendant’s daughter (not just ‘death’ she was killed in Israel) told him: “The Quran is a sacred book to Muslims, and treating it as you did is going to cause extreme distress. This is a tolerant country, but we just do not tolerate this behaviour.”

The judge has ordered a pre-sentence report, with sentencing scheduled for April 29. As part of his bail conditions, the defendant is banned from posting on social media.

The [Free Speech Union](#) continues the report with an informative round up of other cases including the recent murder of Salwan Momika, the Batley teacher and the Wakefield schoolboy.

One comment to GMP’s statement said that the reason the police went so far as to give the defendant’s date of birth was to make sure nobody attacked the ‘wrong Mr K-burner’ Others are pondering why or what persuaded him to plead guilty?