

Protesters burn Koran at Stockholm mosque on Eid holiday

From [Reuters](#) and the Swedish edition of [The Local](#)

STOCKHOLM, June 28 (Reuters) – A man tore up and burned a Koran outside Stockholm’s central mosque on Wednesday, an event that risks angering Turkey as Sweden bids to join NATO, after Swedish police granted permission for the protest to take place.

Police later charged the man with agitation against an ethnic or national group.

Turkish foreign minister Hakan Fidan condemned the act in a tweet, adding that it was unacceptable to allow anti-Islam protests in the name of freedom of expression.

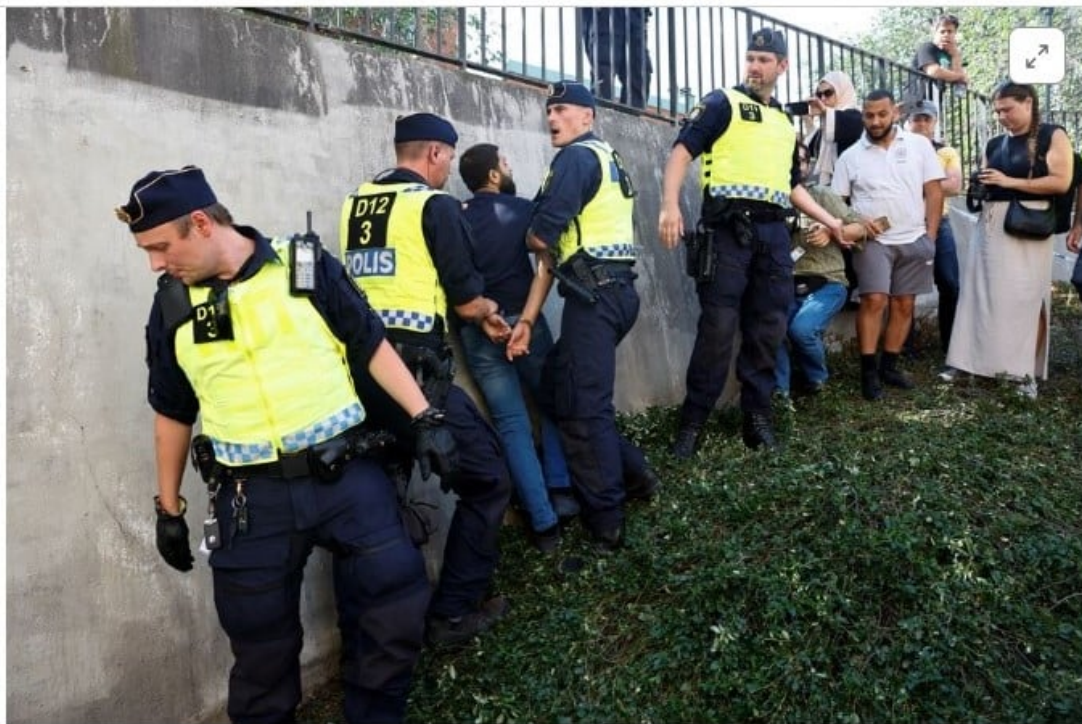


The Iraqi anti-Islam campaigner Salwan Momika burns a copy of the Quran outside the mosque in öädermalmä

Some 200 onlookers witnessed one of the two organisers tearing up pages of a copy of the Koran and wiping his shoes with it before putting bacon in it and setting the book on fire, whilst the other protester spoke into a megaphone. *There are tastier ways to cook bacon.*

Some of those present shouted 'God is great' in Arabic to protest against the burning, and one man was detained by police after he attempted to throw a rock. A supporter of the demonstration shouted "let it burn" as the holy book caught on fire.

After the burning, police charged the man who set fire to the Koran with agitation against an ethnic or national group and with a violation of a ban on fires that has been in place in Stockholm since mid-June.



[1/5] Police officers intervene after people's reaction as demonstrators burn the Koran (not pictured) outside Stockholm's central mosque in Stockholm, Sweden June 28, 2023. TT News Agency/Stefan Jerrevang/via REUTERS



While Swedish police have rejected several recent applications for anti-Koran demonstrations, courts have overruled those decisions, saying they infringed on freedom of speech.

At least at the time of writing, the burning of the Quran in

central Stockholm on Wednesday did not cause anything like the level of disruption caused in Easter 2022, when a series of Quran burnings carried out by the Danish extremist Rasmus Paludan in areas with high immigrant population led to riots across Sweden.

A journalist from TT estimated that only around 200 people attended the burning, with one woman saying the Lord's Prayer and waving around a cross, one man being seized by police and those supporting the burnings shouting at those supporting the mosque.

...Mosque director and Imam Mahmoud Khalfi said in a statement on Wednesday, "The mosque suggested to the police to at least divert the demonstration to another location, which is possible by law, but they chose not to do so,"

Outside the mosque, elderly Muslim men stood, pleading with younger Muslims not to be provoked. "Just go inside the mosque, don't give him any attention. The Quran is in your hearts," one said.

One of the two people who took part is Salwan Momika, who in a recent newspaper interview described himself as an Iraqi refugee seeking to ban the Koran. Salwan Momika, from Iraq, said he wanted to burn the Quran, the holy book of Islam, to protest against the Muslim religion, rather than to protest against Sweden joining Nato.

"We are going to burn the Quran," he told the TT newswire before carrying out the act. "We are going to say 'wake up Sweden. This is democracy and it will be in danger if they say we can't do it'. We are not fighting against Muslims, but against their thoughts. We are not against Muslims, we are on their side," he said.

Momika has said previously that he believed the Muslim religion had such a negative impact that the Quran should be banned globally.