

UN to meet on Sweden Quran-burning stunt decried by Muslim world



United Nations, July 5 (RHC)-- The United Nations Human Rights Council will hold an urgent meeting on the burning of a Quran outside a mosque in Sweden, following a request from Pakistan. The debate on the rise of religious hatred will likely take place later this week, a spokesperson for the Geneva-based UN council told a press briefing on Tuesday.

The desecration of the Quran took place outside the Swedish capital Stockholm's main mosque last week and was carried out by a man during a protest authorised by the police. The Swedish government condemned the "Islamophobic" act, after an international Islamic body called for measures to avoid future desecration of the Muslim holy book.

Officials from numerous countries, including many in the Middle East, have also reacted to the incident, calling on Stockholm to step up measures against religious hate. Morocco went beyond a statement of condemnation and recalled its ambassador to Sweden for an indefinite period.

Morocco's foreign ministry also called on Sweden's chargé d'affaires in Rabat and expressed its "strong condemnation of this attack and its rejection of this unacceptable act", according to state media.

Soon after the incident, protesters stormed the Swedish embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, chanting: "Yes, yes to the Quran."

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: "We will teach the arrogant Western people that it is not freedom of expression to insult the sacred values of Muslims." Ankara is currently holding up Sweden's application for NATO membership on accusations that the Nordic nation harbours people Turkey considers "terrorists."

Speaking at a news conference in Ankara on Tuesday, Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told reporters that he was concerned because Sweden was unable to prevent provocations. Fidan said that Turkey expects Sweden to fulfil its commitments under a deal struck at the NATO Madrid summit last year, in order to be able to join the military alliance.

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