Pope Francis condemns recent Quran burnings as barbaric

Vatican City, August 2 (RHC)-- Pope Francis has denounced as "barbaric" the recent Qur'an burnings in Sweden and Denmark, saying such blasphemous moves prevent dialog among nations. The pontiff made the remarks in a letter on Tuesday, in response to Argentinian Shia scholar Abdul Karim Paz, representative of Argentina's Islamic foundation.

Last week, Abdul Karim Paz sent a letter to the head of the Catholic Church, in which he condemned the repeated acts of burning copies of the holy Muslim book and said they were against the unity of Abrahamic religions. "The story of burning the Holy Qur'an is really a barbaric act. These cases harm and prevent mature dialog between people," the Pope wrote in response.

Pope Francis has already condemned the sacrilegious acts, expressing "anger and disgust" over the moves.
"Any book considered Holy must be respected out of respect for those who believe in it. And freedom of expression should never be used as an excuse to despise others."

In an interview with the UAE's Arabic-language newspaper al-Ittiha in early July, the Pope rejected permitting Qur'an desecration under the pretext of "freedom of speech." His remarks came after Sweden permitted the desecration of a copy of the Qur'an outside a Stockholm mosque.

Over the past month, the holy Muslim book has been subject to acts of desecration by extremist elements multiple times in Sweden and Denmark, whose governments have sanctioned and justified such insults as "freedom of expression."

The sacrilegious acts have ignited the ire of the entire Muslim community across the globe. Several countries have summoned or expelled Swedish and Danish ambassadors. The Nordic countries have deplored the desecration of the Qur'an but claimed that they cannot prevent it under constitutional laws protecting freedom of speech.

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