

Beat: News

Burning the Holy Quran op/insulting the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

considered to be a very serious sacrilege

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USPA NEWS - High Court Acquittal of Burning Holy Quran by Hamit Coskun is Catastrophic Travesty of Justice

The High Court's acquittal of Hamit Coskun, for burning the Holy Quran, is seen by Muslims as a grave and catastrophic travesty of justice. Hamit Coskun was found guilty at Westminster Magistrates Court of the offence of using disorderly behaviour in June 2025, for burning the Holy Quran outside the Turkish Embassy in London. However, Hamit Coskun's conviction was overturned this week when he was acquitted on appeal by the High Court in the United Kingdom. His unacceptable action of burning the Holy Quran and conduct are viewed as insulting by the 7 million Muslims in the United Kingdom.

This is seen as the most despicable, hurtful, and extreme acts of provocation, said Shazada Hayat President UICF (UK) and international community welfare campaigner.

A Muslim is prepared to go to any lengths to bring to justice a gross violator and evil perpetrator of this heinous act. Throughout the world, in Muslim countries, anyone burning the Holy Quran is regarded as the most despicable crime anyone can commit. It is considered blasphemy and carries a mandatory death sentence. In many cases, public mob justice is carried out swiftly and immediately, with punishment described as very severe. In some instances, even police officers who should act in the interest of the law join members of the public in lynching the perpetrator, said Shazada Hayat.

If an offending perpetrator manages to reach a court and is found guilty in certain Muslim countries, the death sentence is mandatory. Punishments can include hanging, decapitation, death by firing squad, or stoning to death, and in some cases the guilty individual may be given a choice as how he wishes to be killed. Burning the Holy Quran or insulting the Holy Prophet Muhammad?, is considered to be a very serious sacrilege and desecration of the Holy Quran.

This is a matter of public interest and judges must administer discretion where no specific blasphemy law is available, then the judges have a discretion to set a precedent through judicial decisions (judge made law).

The historical example judge made law and setting precedents is when the legendary Lord Denning, one of the greatest legal authorities in UK's history, who used judicial discretion and set precedents that reshaped aspects of United Kingdom law, where it was ambiguous and statute law wasn't available. To date, many of Lord Denning's decisions and precedents set remain legal authority and is in effect. British judges should have similarly set precedents in Hamit Coskun's case, to demonstrate that such conduct is not acceptable in a civilised society and that causing extreme provocation and hurt to a religious community will not be tolerated under any circumstance.

Shazada Hayat went on to say, The Crown Prosecution Service were within their right as common sense prevailed and therefore charged Hamit Coskun with religiously motivated harassment causing alarm and distress. He was convicted in June 2025 under Section 32(1)(c) of the Crime and Disorder Act, the religiously aggravated version of Section 5 of the Public Order Act. The court found that his actions were motivated at least in part by hostility toward Muslims, a conclusion drawn from statements he made during a police interview while in custody. The British Appeal Court should have acted in the public interest and upheld the conviction in order to set an example.

The acquittal has set a catastrophic precedent against the public interest. This is to mean that when a Muslim is humiliated, and provoked beyond comprehension, then the gravity of the offense must be recognised and punished severely accordingly. We need to learn from the controversy surrounding Salman Rushdie and his novel The Satanic Verses, which Muslims regarded as despicable and insulting to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The law in the United Kingdom allowed the publication of the book, which was and is still profoundly offensive. Many Muslims around the world protested the publication and lives were lost during demonstrations, resulting in widows, orphans, and bereaved parents.

When an individual later took the law into his own hands and attacked Salman Rushdie, he did this believing that law had failed to prevent extreme hurt and provocation. Blasphemy, whether direct or indirect, is deeply painful to believers. As a British Muslim, I would be profoundly hurt if someone burned the Holy Quran, the Bible, or the Torah, it is wrong to burn any faith's holy book for publicity, to hurt offend and for financial gain.

Shazada Hayat said, In the case of Charlie Hebdo in France, where cartoons depicting and insulting Prophet Muhammad? were published, the cartoons were viewed by many Muslims as humiliating and extremely provocative. The subsequent attack on the magazine's offices resulted in the deaths of the cartoonists and others working in the building, as well as the attackers. This is because the authority and the courts failed to address the Muslim hurt and concerned.

As a result, many families lost loved ones, with mothers losing sons, wives becoming widows, and children becoming orphans.

Politicians and judges must recognise that insulting religion constitutes extreme humiliation and provocation. The introduction of a blasphemy law must be made in Britain or, in its absence, judges must set binding precedents making the desecration of religious books such as the Holy Quran, the Bible, the Torah or any religious books a grave crime.

Politicians, like Robert Jenrick MP, who supported Hamit Coskun's appeal and brazenly celebrated, need to understand that for cheap publicity and ulterior motives and trying to get high in the political world, will not happen as this will come to haunt him. If he wants to make a real name for himself in politics then he needs to study Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandella and not Pharaohs, Hitler and Benjamin Netanyahu as his heroes. Those negative supporters of Hamit Coskun have stated, as the Quran was purchased by Hamit Coskun, it was his property and to do whatever he wished with it, including burning it.

This ridiculous argument is utterly rejected. Just because someone goes into a shop and purchases the British flag, the Union Jack, and claims the right to burn it, because it belongs to him, the great patriotic British public would most certainly lynch that evil perpetrator as a traitor. Such an act provokes strong public reaction and likely legal consequences.

The Holy Quran belongs not just to an individual owner but to Muslims around the world, and common sense must prevail to protect the safety, security, and the due respect to multi faiths. The acquittal is not only a legal decision but a defining moment that tests the balance between freedom and responsibility in a diverse society. Unless clearer safeguards are established to prevent extreme provocation against faith communities, the risk to social cohesion, public order, and national unity will only deepen, leaving lasting divisions that must be avoided,

said : Shazada Hayat.

(Interviewed by Aurangzeb Akbar)

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