# Man faces legal battle after burning Koran outside Turkish Consulate sparks violent attack



A man has faced significant legal repercussions following an incident in which he burned a Koran outside the Turkish Consulate in central London. The event, which occurred on February 13, has drawn attention not only for the provocative act itself but also for the violent response it provoked. Hamit Coskun, 50, was reported to have shouted derogatory phrases about Islam while setting fire to the religious text, an act that has since raised questions about the boundaries of free expression and the responses to it.

During the incident, Coskun allegedly made inflammatory statements such as “f\*\*\* Islam” and “Islam is the religion of terrorism” while displaying the burning Koran outside the consulate situated on Rutland Gardens in Knightsbridge. As the court heard, this act incited a counter-reaction: a bystander reportedly approached Coskun to express his outrage and assaulted him. Video footage, later submitted as evidence, captured the intense confrontation, showing the man slashing at Coskun with a knife and physically attacking him. The assailant allegedly yelled, “Burning the Koran? It’s my religion! You don’t burn the Koran,” highlighting the emotional and cultural sensitivities surrounding such an act.

Coskun has pleaded not guilty to a charge of religiously aggravated public order offence, which involves disorderly conduct that is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to individuals of a religious community. He also denied another charge related to general public disorder. His defence counsel, Katy Thorne KC, argued that throughout the act, Coskun maintained a calm demeanour and believed he was expressing his right to protest against perceived oppression by the Turkish government, which he associates with radical Islamism. Thorne pointed out that hostility towards particular religions is not uncommon, suggesting it is part of a broader context where individuals may express criticism of religious beliefs without crossing into illegality.

The incident has not only raised questions about freedom of speech but also highlighted the distressing reactions that such provocations can invoke. Moussa Kadri, the man accused of attacking Coskun, has since pleaded guilty to assault but denied the charge of possessing a bladed article. His case will be assessed in Southwark Crown Court, reflecting the severe nature of the response triggered by Coskun's actions. This legal battle lends itself to broader discussions about public expression and safety in multicultural societies, where acts perceived as offensive to deeply held beliefs can escalate into violence.

The prosecution's focus has shifted notably since the initial charges. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) amended the terms of the accusations against Coskun, retracting references to "the institution of Islam" in a sign of evolving legal interpretations concerning religious freedom and public expression. Coskun, defining himself as an atheist, maintains that his actions are within his rights to express dissent, stating, “Encountering such treatment in a country like England, which I truly believed to be a place where freedom prevailed, was a real shock to me.” His legal fees have been covered by organisations advocating for free speech and secularism, indicating the case has garnered support from various civil society groups advocating for the rights of individuals to critique and protest against religious doctrines.

The outcome of these legal battles remains uncertain as the court prepares to deliberate on the charges against each party involved. District Judge John McGarva is expected to issue a verdict soon, a decision that may further shape the discourse around freedom of expression and the limits of public commentary on religious beliefs in contemporary society. The case stands as a stark reminder of the tension that continues to exist between personal convictions, societal norms, and the law in an increasingly pluralistic world.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/man-who-burned-koran-was-attacked-and-spat-at-court-told-AT5IQZ4UOJNAXBMSPASZXSECD4/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/man-admits-assault-koran-burning-turkish-consulate-london-knightsbridge-b1222348.html> - Moussa Kadri, 59, pleaded guilty to assaulting Hamit Coskun, 50, who burned a Koran outside the Turkish Consulate in London on February 13. Kadri denied possessing a bladed article during the incident. The case was sent to Southwark Crown Court for trial on the weapon charge and sentencing for the assault on May 12. Coskun, from Derby, has denied religiously motivated harassment over the same incident and is due to go on trial at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on May 28.
3. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-02-15/man-denies-religious-aggravation-charge-after-burning-of-quran> - Hamit Coskun, 50, from Derby, has been charged with religiously motivated harassment after allegedly burning a Koran outside the Turkish consulate in Knightsbridge. Footage posted on social media appeared to show a man burning a book outside its barrier. The same man is then seen lying on the ground as someone kicks him and slashes towards him with a knife before walking away. Coskun appeared at Westminster Magistrates’ Court and entered not guilty pleas. He was released on conditional bail and will appear before the same court for trial on May 28.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/turkish-knightsbridge-islam-derby-london-b1211358.html> - A 50-year-old man has denied religiously motivated harassment after a Koran was burned outside the Turkish consulate in London. Hamit Coskun, 50, from Derby, has been charged with 'intent to cause against religious institution of Islam, harassment, alarm or distress' during an incident near the consulate in Rutland Gardens, Knightsbridge, central London, on Thursday. Footage posted on social media appeared to show a man burning a book outside its barrier. The same man is then seen lying on the ground as someone kicks him and slashes towards him with a knife before walking away. Coskun appeared at Westminster Magistrates’ Court and entered not guilty pleas. He was released on conditional bail and will appear before the same court for trial on May 28.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/turkish-knightsbridge-kensington-and-chelsea-derby-metropolitan-police-b1211344.html> - Two people have been charged after a video emerged of a man burning a Koran and another man attacking him outside the Turkish consulate in London. Social media footage showed a man being kicked on the ground by his knife-wielding attacker. Hamit Coskun, 50, from Derby, had been charged with a religiously aggravated public order offence after he was filmed apparently burning the book in Rutland Gardens, Knightsbridge on Thursday, the Metropolitan Police said. He was remanded in custody and will appear before Westminster Magistrates’ Court today. Moussa Kadri, 59, from Kensington and Chelsea, has been charged with causing actual bodily harm and possession of an offensive weapon. He was bailed and will appear at the same court on Monday.
6. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/koran-burning-protester-hamit-coskun-charges-cps-rewritten-london-turkish-consulate> - Prosecutors have removed references to 'the institution of Islam' from charges against a man who burned a Koran in central London. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has amended a charge against Hamit Coskun, 50, who set fire to a copy of the Muslim holy book outside the Turkish consulate in London. Coskun, who lives in Derby, is no longer accused of harassing the 'religious institution of Islam' - with the CPS admitting it had 'incorrectly applied' the term. It has since substituted in a new charge to 'more accurately reflect the alleged offence'.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/southwark-crown-court-koran-turkish-london-knightsbridge-b2732862.html> - A man has admitted attacking a person who burned a copy of the Koran outside the Turkish Consulate in central London. Moussa Kadri, 59, of Kensington and Chelsea, pleaded guilty to assaulting Hamit Coskun, 50, in Rutland Gardens, Knightsbridge, on February 13. But, appearing at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Monday, Kadri denied possession of a bladed article in relation to the incident. Kathryn Hughes, prosecuting, said Coskun had been burning a Koran outside the consulate in 'protest'. She told the court that Kadri left a nearby building carrying a large bread knife and proceeded to 'assault' Coskun. The charge of possessing a bladed article carries a maximum sentence of four years’ imprisonment. Kadri was granted conditional bail, with a condition not to contact Coskun directly. The case was sent to Southwark Crown Court, where Kadri will stand trial for the weapon charge and be sentenced for the assault on May 12. Coskun, from Derby, has denied religiously motivated harassment over the same incident and is due to go on trial at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on May 28.