# Man convicted for Koran burning fears for his life amid death threats and police inaction



A man convicted for burning a copy of the Koran outside the Turkish consulate in London has expressed profound fears for his safety following his controversial protest. Hamit Coskun, 50, demonstrated on February 13, holding the flaming religious text aloft while shouting phrases such as "Koran is burning" and "Islam is a religion of terrorism." This act, marked by inflammatory rhetoric, has since led to him receiving hundreds of death threats, prompting a worry for his life.

Coskun was fined £240 and an additional £96 surcharge by Westminster Magistrates' Court for his actions, which the court deemed constituted a religiously aggravated public order offence. District Judge John McGarva explained that, while an act of burning a religious book can be offensive, Coskun's timing, location, and verbal abuse exacerbated the disorderly conduct.

The protest was allegedly aimed at Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whom Coskun accuses of enabling radical Islamists. However, the demonstration rapidly escalated from verbal protest to physical danger, as Coskun was attacked by an assailant wielding a knife, an incident he noted in his statements. Following the attack, a break-in at Coskun's home by two individuals reinforced his fears, prompting a brief period of police protection.

In an interview, Coskun described the torrent of threats he has received through social media and expressed dissatisfaction with law enforcement’s response. "What really worries and upsets me is the attitude of the police... when I told them I felt unsafe, they said there was nothing they could do," he said. This sentiment has left him feeling unprotected in a country he hoped would provide asylum.

Political backlash followed Coskun’s conviction, with prominent figures, including opposition leader Kemi Badenoch, disputing the legality of the ruling. Critics have argued that this situation signals a disturbing trend toward reinstating blasphemy laws, which the UK formally abolished in 2008, supposedly safeguarding freedom of expression. The National Secular Society and the Free Speech Union have taken up Coskun’s cause, promising to support his appeal against the conviction.

In a display of his defiance, Coskun has reiterated his commitment to free speech. "I am an activist. I criticise Islam. I think that Islam poses a threat to the whole world," he stated. Despite the risks, he remains steadfast in his belief in the right to protest and voice dissent against what he perceives as threats to freedom and democracy.

The issue raises stark questions about the boundaries of free speech in the UK amidst rising tensions around religious sensitivities and the potential for violence in response to provocative actions. Advocates for free speech warn that the conviction of Coskun may represent a precarious moment for civil liberties in the UK, as public discourse grapples with the complexities of respecting diverse beliefs while maintaining the right to critique. As legal battles loom, Coskun’s case could well become a litmus test for freedom of expression in contemporary Britain.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776749/Man-convicted-burning-Koran-shouting-f-islam-outside-Turkish-embassy-admits-worried-end-killed.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/4663d8c06cb00d37dd295bd4c82698e1)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776749/Man-convicted-burning-Koran-shouting-f-islam-outside-Turkish-embassy-admits-worried-end-killed.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/crime/hamit-coskun-koran-burning-court-b2698865.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776749/Man-convicted-burning-Koran-shouting-f-islam-outside-Turkish-embassy-admits-worried-end-killed.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-02-15/man-denies-religious-aggravation-charge-after-burning-of-quran), [[7]](https://freespeechunion.org/fsu-attempts-to-contact-koran-burning-suspect-amid-fears-of-blasphemy-law-by-the-back-door/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776749/Man-convicted-burning-Koran-shouting-f-islam-outside-Turkish-embassy-admits-worried-end-killed.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.thejc.com/news/politics/quran-burner-blasphemy-laws-cnhlk1n7)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/4663d8c06cb00d37dd295bd4c82698e1), [[4]](https://www.newarab.com/news/uk-man-charged-burning-quran-amid-blasphemy-law-criticism)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776749/Man-convicted-burning-Koran-shouting-f-islam-outside-Turkish-embassy-admits-worried-end-killed.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/crime/hamit-coskun-koran-burning-court-b2698865.html)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776749/Man-convicted-burning-Koran-shouting-f-islam-outside-Turkish-embassy-admits-worried-end-killed.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/4663d8c06cb00d37dd295bd4c82698e1> - Hamit Coskun, a 50-year-old man, was convicted in London for a religiously aggravated public order offence after burning a copy of the Quran and shouting anti-Islamic slogans outside the Turkish consulate on February 13. Coskun claimed he was staging a peaceful protest against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whom he accused of turning Turkey into a base for radical Islamists. District Judge John McGarva stated that while burning a religious book may be offensive, the disorderly conduct stemmed from Coskun's timing, location, and use of abusive language. Coskun was fined £240 ($325). The National Secular Society and the Free Speech Union, which supported Coskun’s legal fees, criticised the conviction as a threat to free speech and vowed to appeal, potentially taking the case to the European Court of Human Rights. Coskun defended his actions as a democratic protest and labelled the ruling an attack on free expression. The UK government affirmed that blasphemy laws had been repealed in 2008 and asserted that no new ones would be introduced.
3. <https://www.thejc.com/news/politics/quran-burner-blasphemy-laws-cnhlk1n7> - Senior MPs, including former Lib Dem leader Tim Farron, have shared concerns over the decision to charge a man for burning the Quran outside the Turkish consulate in London. The man was viciously attacked with a knife during the stunt but still found himself in police custody in the aftermath.
4. <https://www.newarab.com/news/uk-man-charged-burning-quran-amid-blasphemy-law-criticism> - Hamit Coskun set fire to a Quran outside the Turkish embassy in London in solidarity with Quran burner Salwan Momika, who was killed last January. Coskun was accused of behaviour likely to cause 'harassment, alarm, or distress' after burning a copy of the Quran. Charges against him were altered amid a right-wing backlash.
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-02-15/man-denies-religious-aggravation-charge-after-burning-of-quran> - A 50-year-old man has denied religiously motivated harassment after a Quran was allegedly burned outside the Turkish consulate in Knightsbridge. 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 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.
6. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/crime/hamit-coskun-koran-burning-court-b2698865.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.
7. <https://freespeechunion.org/fsu-attempts-to-contact-koran-burning-suspect-amid-fears-of-blasphemy-law-by-the-back-door/> - The Free Speech Union (FSU) is attempting to establish contact with Hamit Coskun, a 50-year-old man charged with a religiously aggravated public order offence after he burned a Koran outside the Turkish consulate in London. The case has sparked fears that England and Wales are on the brink of reviving blasphemy laws by stealth, despite having formally abolished them in 2008. Mr Coskun was arrested and charged on Saturday after footage circulated on X showing a man setting fire to a book outside the Turkish consulate in Knightsbridge. Moments later, a second man appears to attack him, repeatedly slashing at him with a knife and the kicking him as he lay on the floor.