

# Muslim nations call for boycott of Swedish products

From [DW](#)

The diplomatic fallout over the burning of the Quran outside a mosque in Sweden is threatening to escalate into a trade war after calls from Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa came to boycott Swedish products. . . A key point of contention is the fact that the protest was given the go-ahead by a Swedish court.

Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan has led a chorus of criticism from a host of Islamic governments over the decision to allow anti-Islam protests to go ahead. "We will eventually teach the arrogant Westerners that insulting Muslims is not freedom of thought," Erdogan said in televised remarks.

Saudi Arabia noted how the act coincided with the Eid al-Adha religious festival and the end of the Hajj pilgrimage: "These hateful and repeated acts cannot be accepted with any justification," the Saudi Foreign Ministry said.

Earlier this week, the Cairo-based Al-Azhar mosque, the oldest Sunni institution in the Muslim world, urged Muslims to boycott Swedish products over the recent Quran burning. It suggested a similar boycott of Danish products amid two incidences of Quran burnings this week in Copenhagen, Denmark's capital. The mosque decried decisions by those governments that allowed the burning of Islam's holy book.



Several protests condemning the Quran burning in Sweden have taken place in Iraq

Image: Ameer Al-Mohammedawi/picture alliance

Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa have taken to social media to call for a boycott of Swedish products using the hashtags “punish the Swedish government” and “boycott Swedish products.”

According to figures provided to DW by the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, 2.6% of Swedish exports went to the Middle East and North Africa in 2022 (\$4.88 billion, or 51.4 billion Swedish krona).

Keith Boyfield, a senior fellow at the Euro-Gulf Information Center (EGIC) said that at a conference earlier this year, Swedish business leaders were already extremely concerned about the way in which the authorities were, in their view, failing to prosecute protestors who burned the Quran. However, he added that because Sweden imports most of its oil and natural gas from Norway and other countries outside of the Middle East, it was important to emphasize that Gulf states have very little in terms of leverage over the Nordic country.

“If there’s an issue over trade, it strikes me that tourism is

going to be one of the key sectors where the Gulf will lose out," he said, adding that Gulf states had been looking to attract Scandinavian tourists and have also been investing heavily in sports such as golf.

Meanwhile, Swedish prime minister Ulf Kristersson has said that he is "extremely worried" about the consequences if more demonstrations go ahead in which the Quran is desecrated. "If they are granted, we are going to face some days where there is a clear risk of something serious happening," he told Swedish news agency TT. "I am extremely worried about what it could lead to."

Referring to an online disinformation campaign by Russian-backed actors, Sweden's security service SAPO said the image of Sweden, which is looking to join the NATO military alliance, has changed "from a tolerant country to a country hostile to Islam and Muslims, where attacks on Muslims are sanctioned by the state and where Muslim children can be kidnapped by social services." SAPO has kept its assessment of the threat level at 3 on a scale of 5, signifying an "elevated threat." *I'm not sure I would call protecting children from FGM, forced married and under-age marriage is exactly 'kidnapping', but what do I know.*