

# Norway police ban Koran burning protest after Turkey summons Oslo envoy

ANKARA/OSLO, [Feb 2 \(Reuters\)](#) – Norwegian police on Thursday banned a planned anti-Islam protest including the burning of a copy of the Koran this week for security reasons, hours after the Turkish foreign ministry summoned Norway's ambassador to complain.

*Apart from Reuters only the [Turkish](#) and [Middle Eastern](#) press have this story in English that I can see.*



Muslims have been angered by demonstrations in which the Quran has been burned [File: Umit Bektas/Reuters]

A group of protesters planned to burn a copy of the Koran outside the Turkish embassy in Oslo on Friday, police said, echoing

similar demonstrations last month in Sweden and Denmark.

“Burning the Koran remains a legal way to express political views in Norway. But this event cannot be carried out for security reasons,” Oslo police said in a statement, citing intelligence it had received. The police can only ban a demonstration if there is a danger to the public. *Sounds like*

*a credible threat came from somewhere; I hope the police and state security follow up who made it.*

Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Turkey had raised the planned demonstration in a meeting.

"Our ambassador referred to the constitutional right to freedom of expression in Norway, and added that the Norwegian government neither supports nor is involved with the planned demonstration," said a ministry spokesperson.

*It is reported in the Norwegian press and using the technological cheat that is google translate [Nettavisen](#) says,*

"-I know based on previous experience that I will be physically hindered if I try to get to the embassy on Friday," says Sian leader Lars Thorsen to NTB. The burning of the Koran there will therefore not happen, but Thorsen confirms that the group nevertheless plans to carry out some form of commemoration. "Something's going to happen, but there's no telling where and when."

Law professor at the University of Bergen, Hans F. Marthinussen, reacts strongly to the Oslo police's decision to stop the planned Koran burning.

"This is a gift package for Erdogan. When those in Sweden say they have freedom of expression, why does the neighbouring country stop a similarly planned demonstration? Then they don't have freedom of speech in Norway, do they? says [Marthinussen rhetorically to Nettavisen.](#)

-It is very strange that the police can keep order and calm, and ensure security around other demonstrations outside mosques and residential areas where there is a large proportion of Muslims, but not outside the Turkish embassy in Oslo. This is very difficult to understand," says Marthinussen.

Marthinussen emphatically emphasizes in a [Twitter message](#) that he has “zero left over” for Sian, and refers to the group as a disgusting organization that spreads xenophobia and fear. “But if you want to burn a Quran, the best place right now is outside turkey’s embassy, because Turkey is using Sweden’s principled defense of freedom of expression against a NATO member,” he writes.

He believes the police’s decision is unconstitutional.

“This is a planned demonstration that the police cannot refuse in the first place. This is classic freedom of speech protected by the Constitution. I believe this demonstration can be held legally even if the police say no,” the law professor said.

“It is a betrayal of our neighbouring country Sweden. This is no small feat. This is about the security of our neighbouring countries and their desire to have protection against an aggressive, imperialist Russia. This is big politics. There is also someone in the police in Oslo who makes an unconstitutional decision to stop the demonstration. We can’t have that . . . “It is not possible to ban demonstrations without further ado,”